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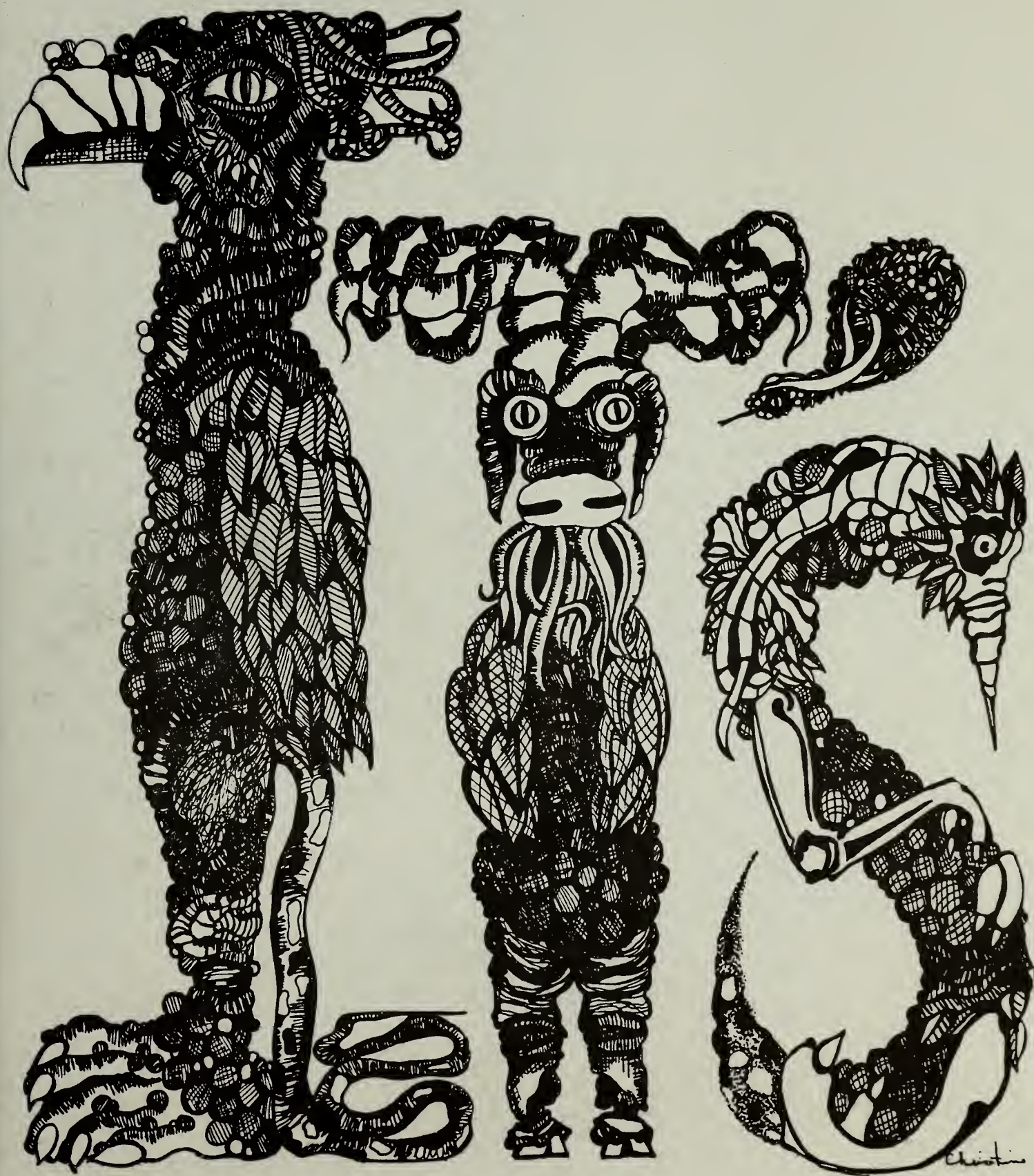
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NUMBER I



THE  
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# IT'S an interview with

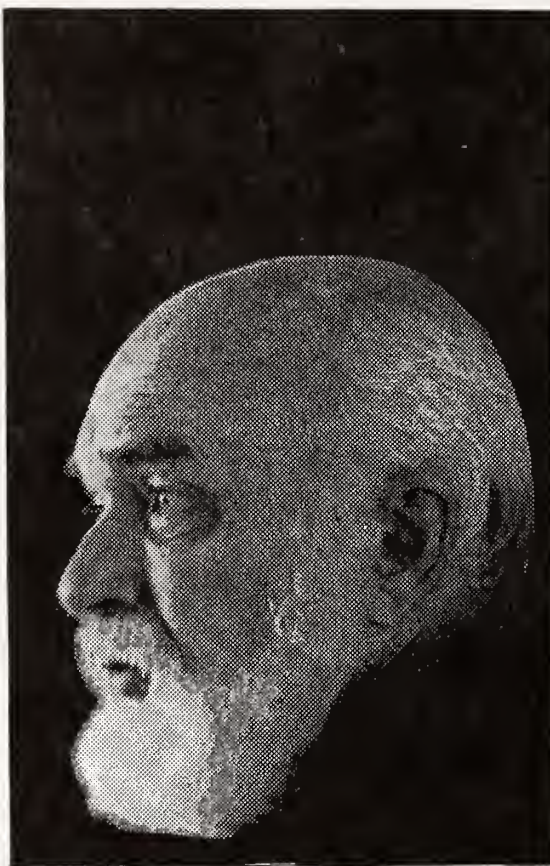
# J THE AMAZING JAMES RANDI

## HOUNDER OF PSYCHICS & OTHER CHARLATANS

*IT'S*—Your long crusade against the paranormal seems to have begun about 1964 and last year led to your MacArthur Fellowship grant of \$272,000 over five years. Congratulations.

*RANDI*—First of all to correct a misstatement: I've been fighting this sort of thing since I was fifteen, but only effectively in the last two decades, especially in the last decade. I've always been against misinformation and people being cheated by those who feel that all they need to do is to be superior in intellect or knowledge in order to take advantage of other people. I don't think that's right and I think it's a big swindle -not that I'm going to impose my standards on other people. I wouldn't do that, but at least I can insist that other people or the victims of these people be informed or at least given the opportunity to be informed.

*IT'S*—Could you please define "para-



psychology" or "psi" for our readers.?

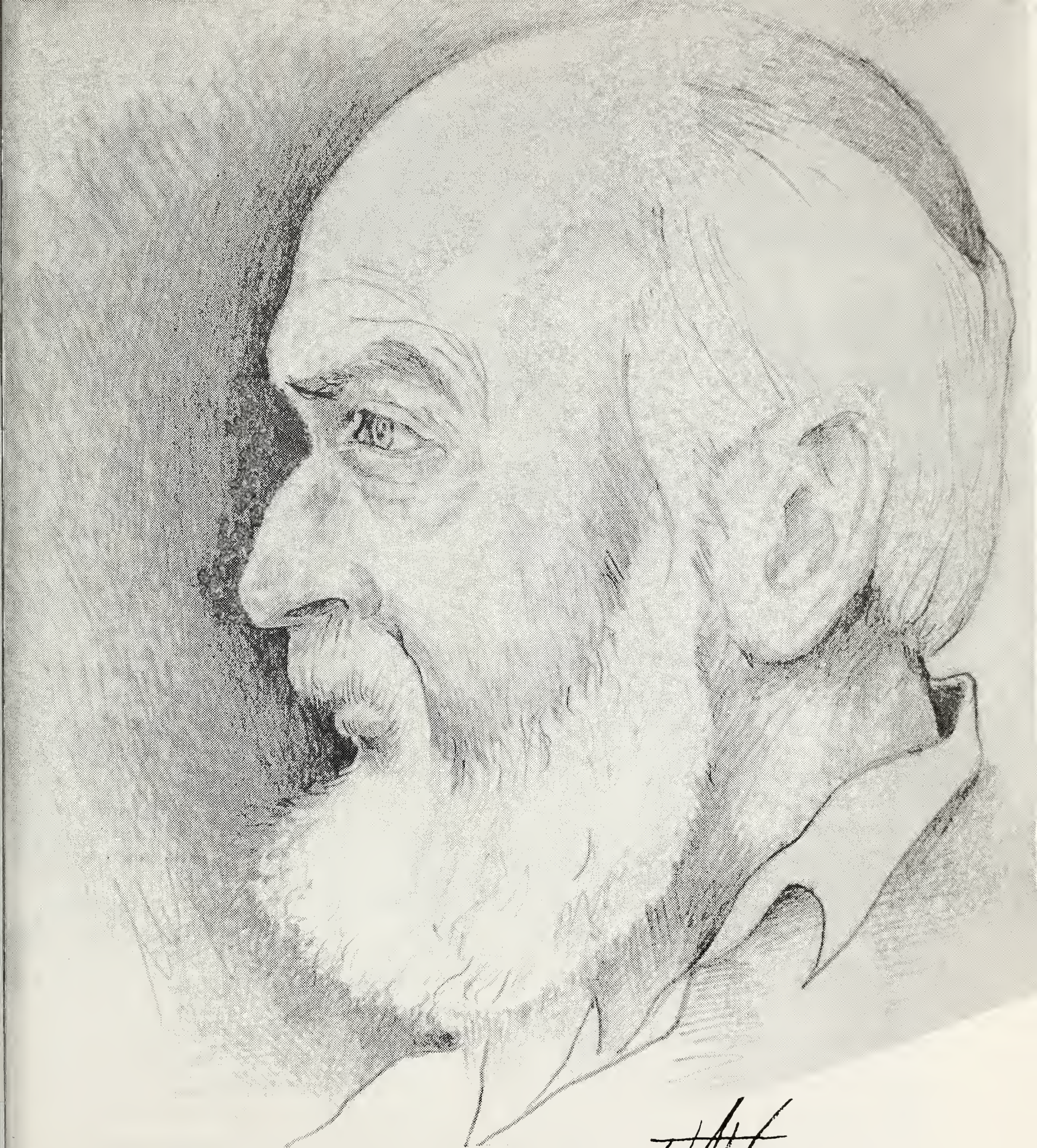
*RANDI*—I can't define psi; I'll leave that to the parapsychologists. Parapsychology deals with what they call "paranormal" - in the dictionary definition: "things which do not appear to have a ready explanation in orthodox science." Well, Sophia Loren doesn't have that explanation either, but that doesn't make her paranormal in my view.

All I can say is, the definitions of psi and the paranormal, the occult, and the supernatural vary greatly from person to person. An example: water dowsing. Some dowsers will tell you that it is a religious gift and that it has nothing to do with the psychic or paranormal because in most cases they are Pentacostals or fundamentalists or whatever, and they fear greatly being connected with anything occult or satanish, anything to do with anything which is not strictly Christian with a very large capital C. Therefore, they say it is not psychic and that

---

Interviewers: Genie Shayne, Andy Wetmore, Evan Steinman, Josh Reiss. Pencil portrait by Evan Steinman. Photographer: Genie Shayne. Location: Sunrise, Fla., July 1987.





JAMES RANDI

Evan Steinman (pencil sketch, 10 x 8½ in.)



God gave them this gift.

I claim the gift isn't there in the first place, but they think they have it and they're a little more confident if they can say that it came from God. That way they can get away from the satanism and the evil dark powers aspect.

Those few among the dowsers that are not maniacally religious will often say that it is a psychic power that they don't understand and they don't know where it comes from, but they were just born with it. Again, I find in my long involved experience, that there's no such thing as the power of dowsing or divining. However, to be accepted, they have to give the source of the power or some opinion as to where it derives. Some of them will say it is paranormal; others will vehemently say it's not paranormal.

So your definition of paranormal is all up in the air. It isn't a simple 1-2-3 thing at all. It depends on the individual you ask.

**IT'S**—What exactly is water dowsing?

**RANDI**—Water dowsing is the reported ability to discover water and/or other substances - gold, oil, dead cats, all kinds of things under the ground or in hidden places or on maps by swinging pendulums or twitching forked sticks or coat-hangers, whatever they use. It's a very insidious kind of thing, what's known as the ideomotor reaction. It's the kind thing you can easily believe in if you're not being careful. By being careful I mean being choosy about what you accept.

To give you another parallel, people believe they have been healed by faith healers. They come away saying, "I know I'm healed; I'm the person that is ailing. I should be the prime witness as to whether or not I'm healed." But that is absolutely wrong; They are the last witnesses of whether or not they're healed. The fact that they don't have a symptom or a series of symptoms does not mean they're healed. It's very much like having a brain tumor, taking a

*' In all the 100-120 years that parapsychology has existed as a serious study, they've not yet come up with one examinable, properly conducted, recorded, and replicable experiment.*

pain killer and saying, "The brain tumor is gone. I know because the brain tumor used to bring me pain. I now no longer have the pain; therefore, the brain tumor is not there." Now, that's very poor witnessing and I think almost any layman would say that's very poor witnessing, but that is the kind of thing that the healees of the faith healers depend upon.

**IT'S**—Is parapsychology a science?

**RANDI**—Parapsychology is more a notion; certainly not a science. Well now, I'll back up a little. It is a science when applied by serious parapsychologists. And I can give you the names of thirty good, very astute, well-disciplined, dedicated parapsychologists. The unfortunate thing is that they're the first to admit that they don't have one positive experiment to report.

In all the 100-120 years that parapsychology, though it may not have been called that, has existed as a serious study, they've not yet come up with one examinable, properly conducted, properly recorded and replicable experiment. You need all those four things to have a scientific experiment. But it has shown some phenomena that will stand until something else comes along to refute it. That is what science is.

**IT'S**—Do you think that the popularity of the parapsychological is because people have a deep inner desire that the paranormal or supernatural actually exist?




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**RANDI**—Yes, because of the fact that it seems real. You see if bending a spoon turned out to be real, then it would outdo anything that Copperfield or Hemming or any of the rest of them can do. But *they* admit that these are illusions they're creating for the purposes of entertainment.

**IT'S**—We also want something extraordinary like that to exist, otherwise life is just too humdrum....

**RANDI**—For most people. Life is really very exciting; but they've been led to believe by Jack London novels that it's got to happen that way or they're not living life to the full. Sophia Loren isn't knocking at my door with her suitcase, saying "I have no place to go." It doesn't happen in real life. But it happens on television; it happens in the movies. They just yearn for everything from Valhalla all the way down to the happy marriage.

**IT'S**—Have you ever thought of investigating the polygraph machine?

**RANDI**—Oh yeah! Well, that is not my field really. It has been done rather thoroughly by the southern California skeptics.

Yeah, I beat the polygraph on two occasions. One in Florida. The other - I can't tell you who was involved, but some top government agencies called myself and a few other people in New York some time ago to determine the answer to the question of "How do we tell when we're being deceived?" The only answer I could give them was: you can't! So be very wary, you may be deceived at any moment. I gave them some general ground rules, fundamental things like that. They introduced the polygraph thing. I showed them specifically how it can be beaten. I warned them again, you may be being deceived at this moment as I tell you this.

So they walked away saying. "I wonder why

we called this meeting." There is an answer to that question, because reports have gone in through respected books. People who say yes, it works - all they need is one Ph.D. to tell them that it works. People are honestly deceived by their own egos. "I can't be wrong. I'm too smart to be wrong. How could I have made a mistake, I've spent most of my life at it? Hey, I've wasted most of my life. Now I'm going to sell aluminum siding."

Same with the parapsychologists. They spend 30-40 years pursuing this chimera that never quite materializes and then they look around and suddenly say, "Wait, we don't have one experiment that stood up to examination after 40 years. We'd have to throw the whole thing in. Nah, I can't do that, I've got position now. I've got tenure here. I might as well stay with it."

I remember Eric J. Dingwall who died at the age of 94. He said to me wistfully one time, "I spent 60 years of my life actively investigating survival after death and spiritualism. And you know what? I don't think there's anything to it."

I said, "Oh yes, there is too. If you find out there is no pig in the barrel, that is a discovery, not what color is the pig, how old it is or how did it get in the barrel. But if you look at it and there is no pig in the barrel that's a discovery right there in itself."

A few decades ago. I went to a Boston radio station, where I spoke about the Nazca lines in the desert of Peru, which Eric von Daniken had made so popular in *Chariots of the Gods*? I had been along those lines and I knew an amateur archaeologist called Maria Reich, who, I swear, if she is alive, must be 100 years old. She's so well preserved, when she dies they will have to beat her liver to death with a stick. I spent a lot of time with Maria down there. She's a lovely sort of crazy old lady, Teutonic, so she counts and measures everything, absolutely everything. She thinks that is the solution to all knowledge. So she has mapped and measured



assiduously the figures down there, but without confirming von Daniken.

Gerald Hawkins, the man who wrote *Stonehenge Decoded*, heard me on the radio program and immediately launched an investigation of that. He wanted me to go. I said I couldn't go; I had other things to do. But I said, "Be sure to call me as soon as you get back and tell me the results."

He called me after they came back, very despondent, and said, "There is no correlation between those lines and the actual facts of astronomy as we know it. So I'm very disappointed."

So I said, "Why disappointed?"

"Well," he said, "we found nothing. It was a waste of time."

I told him the same thing I told Dingwall. "Now you know they are not astronomically oriented. Next question is, are they oriented in any organized way? And if so, in what way?"

And he said, "Yes, that's one way of looking at it but it really is a downer isn't it."

But the world is full of downers!

Scientists say they set out to examine their data and base their conclusions on that data. But what usually happens - and they're the first to admit it - is that they design their experiments to prove their conclusions, which is not what they should be doing. But that's the way human nature is.

**IT'S**—Are you winning or losing the battle against the paranormal?

**RANDI**—I'm not battling against the paranormal; I'm against irresponsible claims. Yes, we're making decided headway. I represent The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, CSICOP, if you will. Our journal, *The Skeptical Enquirer*, has been out thirteen years now. We started out printing 400-500 copies, I think. We are now up around 40-thousand-something readers. It's very substantial: we have those readers and libraries are beginning to take us seriously. One



reviewer said one time about *The Skeptical Enquirer* and my book, *Flim-Flam*, that if a library fails to put these volumes on its shelves, it has done a serious disservice to its clients. You couldn't ask for a better kind of review!



Frankly, I would not have thought the journal would go over 10,000 in ten years. I'm amazed. So we are making definite headway.

[Phone call interrupted interview.]

**RANDI***continuing*—That phone call I got there was from a gentleman who writes for *The Washington Times* and who did a definitive article on Uri Geller. Now he wants to do a radio program and I am the first one he's calling in to join in the program. That's a situation that was probably not in existence seven or eight years ago. It would have been difficult to get in on a program like that because the media were interested in presenting something that they knew people would like to hear rather than what they felt was the truth and what they should hear about.

It depends upon your version of the responsibility of the media. I think the media has a very definite responsibility here.

[Interview interrupted by another phone call about Uri Geller.]

The guy is living a lie. Can you imagine what it is to live a lie 24 hours a day? Every day of every week.

**IT'S**—Is Uri Geller one of the ones who

really thinks he has these powers or is he a very calculating trickster?

**RANDI**—Calculated. Very calculated. In order for him to do these things, he has to set them up well in advance. He has to follow his little formulas and whatnot. Watching on T.V. you can predict what he's going to say, what he is going to do and at what point and where he's going to turn - like getting the camera to give him a wide shot so he can hide something.

**IT'S**—But when he first appeared on T.V., everything seemed so miraculous, totally convincing.

**RANDI**—Sure, David Copperfield seems miraculous.

**IT'S**—How did you discredit Uri Geller?

**RANDI**—How did I discredit him? Well, I didn't discredit him; I discredited the so-called research that was done on him. I showed it was full of holes. I am not a scientist, but I can see when something is not being properly done. Indeed, we discovered that they were done at a whim. He said, "No, I don't want to do it in this room; I want to do it in that room. And I

Entry in *Who's Who in America*  
(44th edition 1986/7)

**RANDI, JAMES**  
(**RANDALL JAMES HAMILTON ZWINGE, RANDI**).

Magician, writer, educator; b. Toronto, Ont., Can., Aug. 7, 1928; s. G. Randall and M. Alice Zwinge. Student, Oakwood Collegiate Inst., Toronto, 1940-45. Internationally known conjuror; Regent's lectr., UCLA, 1984; skeptical lectr. on paranormal subjects. Host TV spls, U.K., Can., U.S.; author: *The magic of Uri Geller*, 1975, (with Bert Sugar) *Houdini, His Life and Art*, Flim-Flam, 1981, *Test Your ESP potential*, 1983; mem. editorial bd.: *Skeptical Inquirer*, 1976-. Recipient Blackstone award Internat. Platform Assn, 1983. Founding fellow Com. for Sci. Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal; mem. Inner Magic Circle (London). Atheist. Performed at White House, 1974.... "The uncritical worldwide acceptance of supernatural, paranormal and occult claims has entirely changed the course of my life in recent years. Now the majority of my work involves investigation of the claims and writing and lecturing on the subject. Recognition by the academic community has been very satisfying to me. My longstanding offer of \$10,000 for a demonstration of any paranormal ability is still unclaimed." [Addendum: 1986 recipient of MacArthur Fellowship grant of \$272,000 to help finance work over five year period. See *Money*, Sept. 1986 for income and expenditure account. Is currently recovering quite well from injuries sustained during Halloween T.V. Houdini stunt.]



‘*There were little stubs of marijuana cigarettes all over the place.... These were no scientific experiments. They were wild parties during which Geller would deign to show some miracles....*’

want to stand by the window.”

Now there may have been reason in that or there may not have. I suspect that nineteen out of the twenty capricious things that he did had no reason to them whatsoever, except to show these people he was in charge and that they weren't.

He would sit down without even having to ask their permission. And that may have been the only way the trick could have been done. That's exactly what magicians do: they make it very evident that they are in control of that stage or platform. They wander where they want, when they want, in a way and with the timing they want. There are very subtle things involved here.

I showed them that that was exactly what was happening by replicating what Geller did. But that's only 10 percent of the whole battle. The other thing is to show that the so-called psychic experiments were anything but scientific. Take the "Experimental Lab" at the Stanford Research Institute: It was an absolute shambles after Geller left. The experiments

‘*That's the kind of thing you're dealing with here: It's blatant, large-scale deception, done with no hope of fooling people who are really going to investigate....*’

were not done during the week; they were done on weekends when the place was closed down. There were little stubs of marijuana cigarettes all over the place. There were spilled whiskey bottles, coke containers, and MacDonalds' wrappers, everything you could imagine, littered everywhere, when the cleaning people would come in the morning. And there were a lot of complaints from the staff about the absolute bacchanale that was held there. These were not scientific experiments. They were wild parties during which Geller would deign to show some miracles which were later reconstructed as if they were scientific experiments. They were done at his whim, if they were done at all.

The very involvement of drugs was an enormous surprise because I didn't think that it would be exactly those kind of loose conditions. But remember, he was running the experiments; they were not.

When I heard about these reports, I was flabbergasted. I didn't think it had carried that far.

That was one of the ways that Geller was discredited. Currently we're discrediting by simply checking up on his statements. He said, for example, he was working for four major mining companies, pointing at maps to tell them where to find gold and diamonds and all that sort of thing. We wrote to all four of them and three of them wrote back and said they'd never heard of Uri Geller. The other company said, yes, they had and had paid him \$350,000 to fly in an aeroplane and point to a map of the Australian gulf. They dug and they found lots of mud. So they had a mud mine rather than a gold mine.

They then fired their chairman and sued him personally for the \$350,000 that he'd paid to Geller out of company funds.

That's the kind of thing Uri Geller does not want people to know.

That's the kind of thing you're dealing with here: it's blatant, large-scale deception, done with no hope of fooling people who are really going to investigate, but fooling enough people



that it will sell a lot of books and pay off his debts.

Remember he's got a lot of people to support too. He's got at least eight people we know of who know everything, exactly how everything is done. They know where the bodies are buried, so to speak. And he has to support all of them.

That business of living a lie 24 hours a day. He only has two kinds of friends: one that he lies to and that's the vast majority. The others are people that know what's going on. And those he has to keep paying because any one of them could go to a major publisher and say "I know how Uri Geller did the whole thing and I want \$300,000 in advance on a book called 'How We Fooled the Entire World.'" And they'd get it. Geller knows that they will.

His two weakest links are the woman, Hannah Shtrang, he's now given a second job to and her brother, his main cook and bottle washer, Shipi - the big one, who at one time did all the dirty work. But the woman had turned on him already in Israel and he had to bring her over here and give her a couple of kids to keep her busy and quiet. And that's exactly what he did. There's no question. He wouldn't marry her but she is a constant threat to him and so is Shipi. They know everything, and one of these days one of them may say, "Do you what to hear a story?"

**IT'S**—Is Geller still performing? Is he in this country?

**RANDI**—Well, he says he's got 40 million dollars. If he has got 40 million dollars why is he running around this country plugging a very third rate book? I don't know why he'd do that. Unless it's an ego. He hasn't got that money at all. There's no question about it. I know a fake and a liar when I see one. And I knew from the moment I first saw him. Also he's anorexic; I don't think he's going to last long.

**IT'S**—We saw a TV documentary, in the *Arthur C. Clarke's World of Amazing Powers* series,

reporting on the "Alpha Project" at the Washington University in St. Louis, the one in which two young magicians fooled the university parapsychologists in 1980? Was that set up beforehand or did you go in after they had already found these two guys who were misleading them?

**RANDI**—Oh no, no! I sent them in.

**IT'S**—To begin with?

**RANDI**—Yeah! Well, I'd never met the kids. I got a letter from a kid named Mike Edwards and there was a little comment in his letter, something to the effect that if I ever got a chance to test scientists - he figured he could fool scientists - he would like to be included in something like that. And I thought, "Well, that's an idea!" So I didn't know quite what to do with the letter, so I stuck it in a new file called "Alpha." A month or so later I got a letter from a kid called Steve Shaw. Although he didn't know who Mike Edwards was, he made the same suggestion. So I dropped that in the Alpha file. And a week after that, this fellow came out in the press that he was going to test children. And I had never met the kids. I heard he called them. So I called Mike and Steve and said, "Look, I'll give you only three or four rules: first of all, if they ever ask you if you're doing tricks, you tell them, 'Yes, we're doing tricks, we're sent here by James Randi.' Point blank. That's all there is to it. No questions. Secondly, we will stop the experiment before they issue a scientific paper - we can't stop lab reports and things like that? - but before they actually publish in a journal, we'll stop it at that point. The third thing is that at all times you must run the experiments. Make sure you do like Geller did. Do capricious things, throw temper tantrums, walk out on them. Do anything you have to in order to make them run things your way. And I will instruct them not to allow you to do that. And we'll see who wins.'"

Anyway that's the way we did it. I told them to go in there with a good paradigm or story of their background. I told them that a good paro-



*‘The basic premise of education should be to teach people not the places to go for references, not authorities upon whom they can depend... (but) how to examine data, and, based upon that data and their past experience, how to come to a conclusion.’*

digm would be something to the effect that you had received an electric shock, because parapsychologists like to believe that people become psychics because of some emotional or electrical shock or something. Mike Edwards said that when his mother was still carrying him in the womb, she backed into a cattle fence and got an electrical shock. And they loved it. Steve said that he'd had a problem with rat traps. Whenever he went past a rat trap it closed automatically and he'd feel an electrical shock at the same time so his father kept him out of the basement in South Africa. South Africa was very neat.

So they were both accepted because they were the only ones with good paradigms. In fact we never published a full account of the "Alpha Project," but I got very close to it. I suppose it's fair to say that the people who ran the experiments claim that they caught them at it, that they discovered the kids were playing tricks, and that's why they finally ceased the experiments. I claim it didn't happen that way. That's an absolute lie.

**IT'S**—What about astrology, would you consider it the most popular form of parapsychology?

**RANDI**—Astrology is probably the most popular and one of the oldest flim-flams. Yes, it still has a massive following.

**IT'S**—Do you think that educationalists and teachers and the educational profession have really done a disservice in not combatting such magical thinking?

**RANDI**—Oh yes, they've done a disservice in that the basic premise of education has been lost. The basic premise of education should not be to teach people the places to go for references, not authorities upon whom they can depend. These are all paper houses as far as I'm concerned, magic formulas and systems. Teachers should show their students how to examine data, and based upon that data and their past experience, how to come to a conclusion. Now you may have to go to authorities for that, you may have to depend upon those authorities with the provision that maybe this authority doesn't know everything about this particular subject; but you should be taught to do that.

People want positives, like they want the ten commandments, a set of rules - do this and that will happen - well, life isn't like that.

Oh, you know: They suddenly lose their job after being twenty five years in a certain job and they are totally unprepared to make a living. They are absolutely desperate. I think that's a serious discrepancy in our educational system and our technology.

When my father died, he left my mother completely unprepared. She had never signed a check in her life, never had a bank account in her life, couldn't pay a bill, couldn't get on a bus by herself to go downtown in the city she was raised in.

**IT'S**—Many college students seem unprepared to do exactly what you've just said because they accept, often without question, astrology and the miraculous and strange accidents that happen in their lives. Many are all full of tales of the supernatural and so on. They never question such things. And that if one were to question a representative sample of the teachers, one would find that they're the same.



**RANDI**— One of the reasons for their failure to question these things is a matter of guts. It takes a certain amount of guts, a certain amount of intestinal bravery, courage, whatever you want to call it, to say, "Hey, a meteorite might fall on me, current might run over me; all I can do is take reasonable precautions against it." But there are no magic formulas, no magic formulas whatsoever.

**IT'S**—Have you ever received threats as a result of your denial of magic and the occult?

**RANDI**—I've got a bag upstairs which is full of what I describe as "hate mail". It's written in pink crayon on a brown paper bag and begins: Commie, pervert, creep, and then it gets nasty. But the ones that talk never do it. When I did the radio program, I collected them and always recognized the handwriting and put them in a specific bin. Then suddenly you'd get a letter in the same handwriting with a signature, and address and everything. Always very pleasant, asking for information about something I mentioned on the program. And we'd put the two of them together and wrap up all his mail with a brick and write on it "Return to Sender," and suddenly he would realize when he saw stamped on every letter "See Your Doctor," "See Your Doctor," "See Your Doctor." They'd look at it and think "Oh my god, I've wasted a year and a half of invective on this man and he didn't pay any attention to it and knew who I was all along." And that's a terrible shock but that's the only way to handle them.

I'm not terribly worried; the only thing I am worried about is some fundamentalist nut coming to the door with a shotgun because God told him that night to blow me away. I'm not worried about Falwell, Popoff, Graham, Swaggart, Robertson, or the rest of them.

I am worried about one of them becoming president, in which case I would pull the plug and sink the United States of America. Oh, I hope Robertson runs for President, because, if he does, he's going to have to start answering

some hard questions, like "What about your trying to raise the dead?" Oral Roberts is not the only one to make that claim. Pat Robertson made that claim a long time ago, with an actual recording of him praying over a girl who had been embalmed - she had embalming fluid instead of blood! - praying to God to make her rise and walk out of the coffin. They had to bury her eventually. They spent the whole day and it didn't work. But this guy wants to become president of the United States? Whoo! Can you imagine him praying over the budget to make it fit?

**IT'S**—And Robertson, like Col. North, is having some problems with his military career.

**RANDI**—Yes, it seems so, and also with a certain thing called truth. They've heard of it. It's sort of out there some place, but they've never met it head on and never had to deal with it. They had to avoid it as much as possible. They live in a pathological world. The same way as North does. Robertson does. It's sort of a world that is a never-never land.

When you step into the field I'm in, you're like Alice. You go through the looking glass, where everything is reversed, looks vaguely familiar. But it's reversed. It means the opposite thing of what you thought it did. It's very strange and you have to adapt to that and realize that people are not rowing with both oars in the water. They're just not the kind of people you're led to believe. They really shouldn't be voting.

*“Pat Robertson made that claim a long time ago, with an actual recording of him praying over a girl who had been embalmed - she had embalming fluid instead of blood! - praying to God to make her rise and walk out of the coffin.”*



“Of course I don’t believe in Astrology because I’m a Leo and Leo’s are very hard to convince of things like that.”

Gosh, that scares me! These people are going to go up and vote either by numerology or by adding up the letters in a man’s name or something like that. These people can win votes, hundreds of thousands of votes really by saying numerologically their numbers add up right. Because there are hundreds of thousands of people who believe in numerology. So it’s pretty scary. Depending on where Jupiter and Sagittarius are. Of course I don’t believe in Astrology because I’m a Leo and Leo’s are very hard to convince of things like that.

**IT’S**—What are you currently working on?

**RANDI**—Oh, my lawn sprinkler system. That is a very simple technical problem. Other than that, it’s Iran. But I might leave Iran to Col. North. He seems to be messing it up very nicely.

Where were we? I’m finishing up the manuscript of the second version of my book, *The Faith Healers*. It’s 30 percent longer than the first version and there are numerous revisions yet to come. That’s what I’m working on.

**IT’S**—According to you, you’ve never been married. You say you’re a great escape artist. So what do you do to get away from it all and unwind?

**RANDI**—To unwind? I go to bed all wound up. People say, “When do you go on vacation?” I started this at the age of eleven and I haven’t been on vacation yet. This whole business is a vacation. I took one vacation in my whole life. That was in Hawaii, and I just lay on the beach waking up every 15 minutes, saying,

“What do I do? Whom do I meet? Where do I stay?” I couldn’t bear it, I spent four days there and called it off.

**IT’S**—One final question or two. Was there anything you said, by the way, that you don’t want us to print?

**RANDI**—No, no! My life’s an open book, except with missing pages - but an open book.

**IT’S**—You said some strong things about Uri Geller....

**RANDI**—During Geller’s visit to this country, he called me ten things: a communist, a nazi, a Hitler-lover, a Jew-hater, a child pornographer, a child molester, a man with a prison record - a long prison record in Canada, an agent of the KGB, an agent of the CIA, an agent for the FBI - that’s the ten. And when I wake up in the morning, I think, “What am I today?”

If I find out a state secret, whom do I go to with it? Let’s see now... oh, it’s July. KGB agent this time. Good idea. It’s really hard to figure out: as a child pornographer I don’t know whether that means that as a child I took dirty pictures or not. I don’t know. But he just came up with these things, willy-nilly all through his tour of this country. And it shows his desperation. He’s really desperate because the group I represent, the only group which really stood up against him, said, “Bullshit!”

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 --- “Parapsychology: A Doubtful Premise.” *The Humanist*. November/December, 1984.

A useful source for scientific articles on the parapsychological is *The Skeptical Inquirer*, the journal of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. To subscribe, write to *The Skeptical Inquirer*, P.O. Box 229, Buffalo, NY 14215-0229.

Mr. Randi’s longtime offer of a \$10,000 check to anyone who can demonstrate a parapsychological phenomenon remains unclaimed.











Richard Kent

# THE WHITE GHOST



illustrated by  
KENNEDY REID

**“T**he White Ghost,” said Andrews.

“Yeah mon, de white ghost a gonna come!” Trini and Andrews gave each other a high five, a low five, and another high five.

“Amen brother!” responded Andrews.

“What you be talking about? Ain’t no such ting as ghosts.” Youth Man walked over and joined the conversation.

“Ain’t no ghosts? Me son, let I tell you,” Andrews put his arm around Youth Man’s shoulder. “Now listen closely....”



**T**here were 32 inmates this particular day at the Old Fort Detention Center. Their crimes ranged from loitering to rape and murder, from assault to embezzlement. Some were awaiting arraignment, others sentencing. It was summer, the evening meal had been served and consumed, and the men were still out in the yard. The Caribbean sun would be setting soon and the men would be locked in either the dorm or their cells for the night.

Mr. Brown and Smalls discussed their arraignments. Smalls had expected his wife to bail him out that day. She didn't.

Jah-Will, the Rastafarian, took off his cap and fiddled with his dreadlocks, "I a man iration," he said to himself. Turning towards the Emperor who was standing near by, he continued, "Lose me from Babylon Jail. I no criminal, ital, ital."

"I be illin." The Emperor spun around in a circle. He pointed with his left hand to the two men. "Hey mon, listen to my tale: When you can make no bail, you spend de night in Babylon Jail. Dere was dis dude. He wanted to sail, but he couldn't break out of Babylon Jail...."

David Solomon Garvey was sitting in a corner reading from his new Bible when he suddenly became excited. He sprung to his feet and exclaimed, "And Solomon and David. Oh King David, Oh beautiful King David, and de Kings, de Kings of Judah! Listen men, let me read you from the Bible."

"Shut up, rapist!" Trini spat on the floor.

"What you know about da Bible?" challenged Youth Man.

Undaunted David Solomon Garvey continued reading, his voice growing louder and louder, "And David and Saul entered de temple of de Lord."

"Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay, por Dios!" moaned Felipe Segundo. He turned to Raymond, his chess partner, "I cut him. Like this." Felipe Segundo slashed the air under Raymond's neck with his index finger.

"Ever since those preachers passed out Bibles on Sunday that man hasn't shut up," complained Raymond. "Every time he comes to a part on King David, he thinks he's reading about himself."

Felipe Segundo moved his knight. Raymond captured the knight with his red bishop. "Ay, ay, ay, ay!" Felipe Segundo stood up. "I kill him, I kill him! Silencio! Silence! I lose this chess game."

"Tension. Tension," said Mr. Brown, as he wiped sweat from his brow. "There's too much tension in this jailhouse." Mr. Brown was nervous. He threw down his paperback novel and lit another cigarette.

"De white ghost a gonna come to Babylon Jail," exclaimed Trini, dancing around as he spoke.

"Da white ghost!" echoed Youth Man.

"...And King David led the seven tribes of Judah and Ethiopia!" screamed David Solomon Garvey. He shouted across to Trini and Youth Man, "Heathen!"

"Rapist!" shouted back Trini.

"Heathen!"

"Rapist!"

"Da white ghost gonna get you!" hollered Youth Man. "Da white ghost gonna come to Babylon Jail!"

"Jah Rastafari!" exclaimed Jah-Will. He raised his fist. "Hail! Haile Selassie, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah! Dese bars can no hold I!"

Garvey tried to shout Jah-Will, "King David, King of Kings, Lord of Lords...."

"Insane asylum," bitched Raymond.

"...and he didn't make bail, but de white ghost came to Babylon Jail!" The Emperor spun around and took a bow.

**T**he bell rang. "Lock down gentlemen. Lock down!" Guards Camacho and Hope took their places. "Move it on out gentlemen." Hope clapped his hands together. "Move it on out."



The inmates moved into the buildings. Youth Man turned his back and stared out over the barbed wire fence to the open field beyond. Felipe Segundo and Raymond continued their chess game undaunted.

Officer Hope approached them, "What do you want? A special invitation?"

"Ay, por Dios. I move the queen, the bishop, checkmate!" Felipe Segundo leaped to his feet. "Vamanos!"

Officer Comacho approached Youth Man. "Don't even think about it." He pointed to the tower and the guard with the rifle. "So you're a big man. Tried to hold up the Kentucky Fried Chicken. Didn't even get any money, did you? How's it feel to be a criminal? You're not going to see the other side of that fence for a long time."

Youth Man scuffed his sneaker on the ground and looked away.

Officer Comacho yelled across the yard to Officer Hope, "You know about this one? He tried to hold up the Kentucky Fried Chicken with a toy plastic gun. This one's stupid mon, eh? Don't even got the brains to get a real gun."

Officer Hope waited patiently as Youth Man slowly walked into the dorm. Hope slammed the metal door shut and locked it.

**"H**ey little King David. Da white ghost gonna get you!" Youth Man taunted.

"No such ting. Dere no such ting," David Solomon Garvey yelled back.

Officer Hope walked in and clapped his hands loudly, "Gentlemen, gentlemen. Head count, stand by your bunks."

Officer Comacho entered Dorm B with clip board in hand. Along the left wall, starting from the door was Garvey, then a

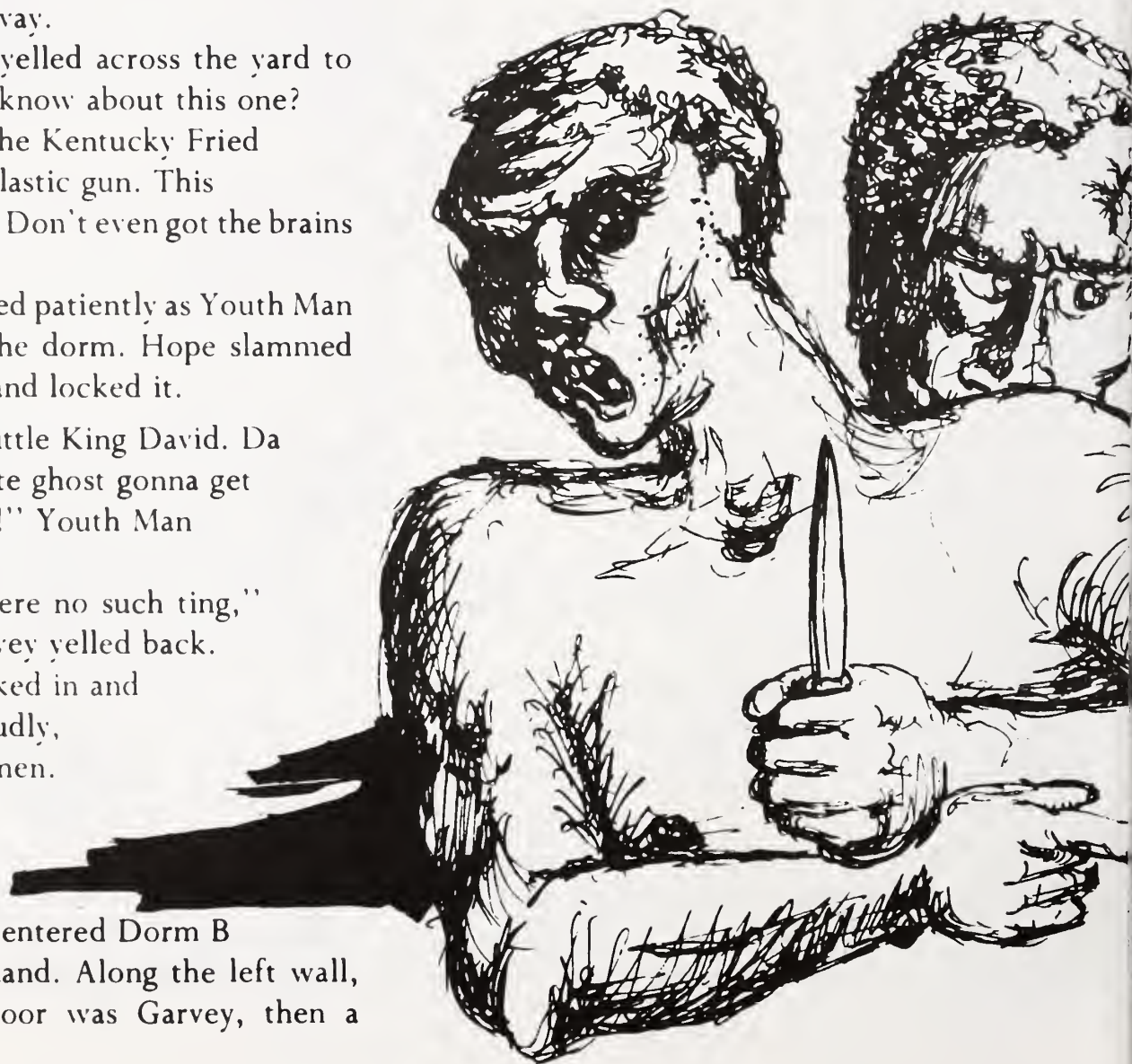
vacant bunk, Youth Man, Smalls, Jah-Will the Rastafarian, Mr. Brown, Raymond, and Andrews. Along the right wall, coming back towards the door, Felipe Segundo, the Emperor, Samuels, Martinez, Mr. Edward, Trini, then two vacant bunks. Officer Comacho checked the names off on his list. "As you were Gentlemen, as you were."

"Da white ghost gonna get King David. Da white ghost gonna get King David," taunted Youth Man.

"Shut up and go take a shower, Youth Man. You smell like a sweating nigger," commanded Smalls. "I got to sleep next to you."

"Yeah when's de last time you showered?" chimed in Trini. Trini was wrapped in a towel and headed to the shower.

"Ain't no nigger," hollered Youth Man.





"We all be niggers," answered Smalls. "Can't take no more of dis shit. You check?"

Felipe Segundo and Raymond played another game of chess. Jah-Will knelt by the small barred window and meditated. Mr. Brown again read his paperback novel. Trini shadow boxed. Samuels sat silently in deep thought. A week ago he had murdered his wife. Put a bullet through her head.

Trini shadow boxed his way across the room. He threw a left and right at Felipe Segundo. He fainted at Mr. Edward.

David Solomon Garvey was reading his new Bible. He was enraptured by the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors. "Oh de beauty, de beauty!" he sighed.

Trini swung a left and a right over Garvey's head. He danced around blocking the light. Garvey ignored him and continued to read. "I spit on you. You like twelve year old pussy? It be good mon?" Trini stopped his shadow boxing. He spat on the floor by Garvey's foot, "I hope dey give you life. Twelve year old. Was it good? Was it good, mon?" He spat on the floor again. Garvey buried his face in his hands and trembled.

"Checkmate! Ay, Ay, Ay. I win!" Felipe Segundo jumped to his feet.

Trini shadow boxed his way back across the room. Felipe pulled an imaginary switchblade



from his shorts and stabbed out at Trini. Trini ducked.

"Ay, Ay, I kill you."

Mr. Edward put down his novel. "This is a crazy house," he said to no one in particular.

"De white ghost. De white ghost!" screamed Trini.

"What means white ghost?" asked Felipe Segundo.

Martinez walked over and explained to him in Spanish.

Felipe Segundo listened intently to Martinez. He looked over at Garvey. Garvey was on his knees praying. "Ay, por Dios."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, it's 30 minutes to lights out. Let's get ready for bed." Officer Hope was back in the dorm.

David Solomon Garvey wrapped himself in a towel and walked into the latrine. Felipe Segundo and Trini followed. Garvey went to the sink to brush his teeth. Trini and Felipe surrounded him. Trini yanked Garvey's towel off. Garvey stood naked.

Felipe slashed at Garvey with his toothbrush, pretending it was a switchblade. "I cut it off!" He slashed up again. "Una muchacha de doce anos. The judge give you life."

Mr. Andrews paced up and down the dorm rehearsing his speech for the judge. "...and the police say I be here, but I no be here, because I be there, you check? How I be there when I be here?"

"Me sons, listen, me sons, while I read from the Bible." Mr. Edward opened his tattered Bible and began reading in a soft voice. The Emperor, Samuels, and Mr. Andrews sat down and listened. Jah-Will turned round and sat on his bunk. It was silent in the dorm. Everyone gave Mr. Edward their undivided attention.

Except Youth Man. Youth Man had flipped a lit cigarette butt on David Solomon Garvey's bunk. He watched the sheet begin to smolder.



"Ay, Ay, Ay!" screamed Felipe. He entered the room and jumped up on the first bunk and leaped from bunk to bunk. Trini was in hot pursuit. Segundo tripped over the Emperor but regained his balance. Trini collided with Segundo and they went tumbling down. Trini punched Segundo. Youth Man got to his feet and began kicking Trini.

Over the din of the fight could be heard Garvey's voice from the shower, "Amazing grace, amazing grace." He was singing off key at the top of his lungs.

Raymond shook his head. "I'm not believing this. I'm in a insane asylum."

Samuels began to tremble. Mr. Edward put down his Bible and tried to comfort Samuels.

The Emperor started a new rap. "Riot going down in Babylon Jail. Dere's a riot in Babylon Jail. Hey mon, let me tell you dis tale. Dere's a riot going down in Babylon Jail...."

"Fire mon! Fire mon! Fire mon, irie ites, King David's bed. Fire mon! Fire mon! Fire mon!" Jah-Will jumped on Garvey's bunk and stomped barefoot on the fire.

Youth Man laughed at Jah-Will, "Look at de Rastaman, Congoman, Bongoman, Bionic Dreadman."

Jah-Will replied, "Nice up yo'self skinny baldhead inna de ridim of life."

"The bed's on fire!" hollered Raymond.

Felipe Segundo shoved Trini off him. He ran to the latrine and grabbed the scrub bucket and filled it with water. Youth Man grabbed the mop. Segundo dumped the bucket on Garvey's bed. The fire was extinguished. Trini and Segundo gave each other a high five, a low five, another high five. Trini mopped up the floor and returned the mop and bucket to the latrine.

David Solomon Garvey returned from the shower still singing "Amazing Grace." He looked at his bed and screamed, "Guard! Guard! Guard! Dem wet me bed. Guard! Guard! Dem wet me bed."

Mr. Edward opened his Bible again. Trini,



Felipe Segundo, and Youth Man got down on their knees in front of Mr. Edward. The Emperor dove onto his bunk and pulled the sheet over his head.

"Tension, I can't take this tension," muttered Mr. Brown.

Officer Hope unlocked the metal door and entered the dorm making a loud clap with his hands. "Gentlemen, gentlemen. What seems to be the problem here?"

"Dem wet me bed. Dem wet me bed," screamed Garvey.



Trini, Felipe Segundo, and Youth Man pretended to seriously pray as Mr. Edward continued to read from the Bible.

Officer Hope clapped his hands again, "Gentlemen, stand by your bunks. Come on, I said move it. That means you Segundo. You too Trini."

Officer Comacho entered the room. The two officers inspected the wet bunk and frowned. They conferred in a subdued voice. Youth Man began to giggle.

Officer Hope went man by man around the dorm and asked each man individually if he wet Garvey's bed. The answer was a unanimous no. No one had wet Garvey's bed.

"Mr. Garvey, one must learn to live amongst one's fellow men. In your case it might be best if we moved you to a private cell."

"No, no," wailed Garvey, "Don't give I lock up."

"We're not giving you lock down, we're not taking your privileges."

"No, no, don't give I lock up."

Officer Hope turned around and faced the rest of the dorm. "There shall be no further trouble tonight, gentlemen. Am I understood?"

The men responded positively.

"Garvey, I'll bring you a dry sheet. Good night, gentlemen." Hope and Comacho turned and exited, locking the door shut behind them.

"White ghost gonna get Garvey tonight!" hollered someone.

Comacho turned the lights out. Garvey kneeled by his bunk and prayed, "Now I lay me down to sleep... and the Lord protect all de heathens in dis room."

**T**here was no breeze. It was sweltering in the dorm. The men couldn't sleep. A mosquito buzzed around Small's head. He tried to swat it but couldn't.

Trini ripped a small hole in his sheet and stuck it over his head. He climbed on Felipe

Segundo's shoulders. They marched down the isle between the bunks to Garvey's bed. "Boo!" hollered Trini.

Garvey didn't respond. Youth Man kicked his feet up in the air and laughed.

"Boo!" hollered Trini.

Youth Man got out of bed and rapped Garvey on the shoulder and dove back into bed.

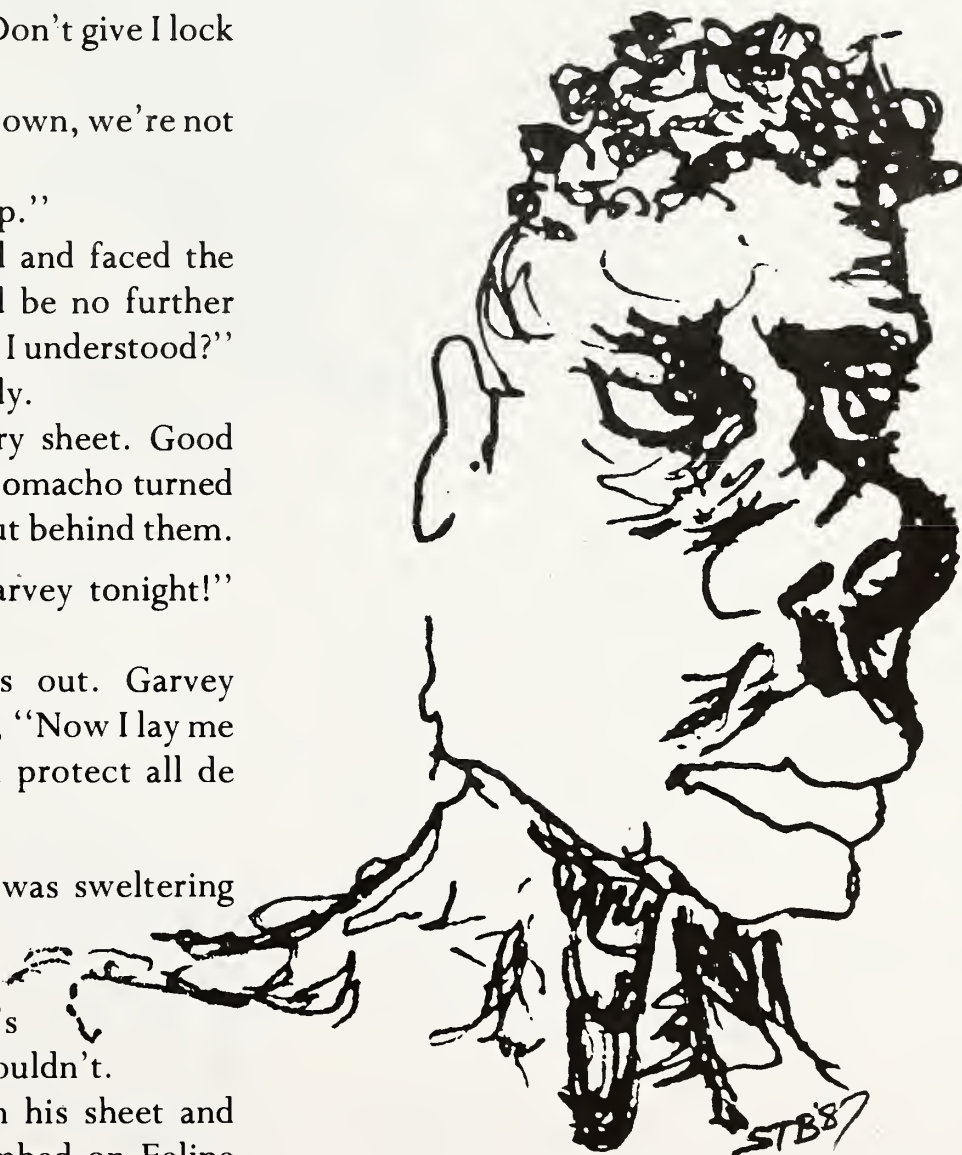
Garvey sat up and opened his eyes, "You no scare I. Ain't no such ting as ghosts."

Felipe Segundo rocked from right foot to left. Trini leaned forward and back, "Dere be ghosts."

"And Duppies" added Jah-Will.

"And Jumbies," added Andrews.

"Ain't no such ting," retorted Garvey, "Ain't no such ting."





"Let I tell you a story," said Andrews.

"Yeah, tell us a story," begged Youth Man and the Emperor. Andrews was a storyteller of renown. Trini pulled the sheet off his head and lowered himself off Felipe Segundo's shoulders.

Andrews stood in the middle of the room. The men who were still awake gave him their attention. First Andrews gave the background then the details. He slowly paced back and forth as he spoke of his grandmother, the weed woman, and the Mamaloi. He turned to the men, "You check?"

They nodded their heads in agreement.

The air had been humid and still all evening. Finally a breeze began to blow. It rustled through the bush, rattling the branches and shaking the palms. It raced across the open field and into the dorm.

Andrews continued his story, casting a spell as he spoke, "Nyabinghi ragnanipiza, yimagagan." Continuing his story, every now and then he would pause, "You check?"

Just as Andrews reached the climax, Samuels let out a terrifying unearthly scream.

"Duppies," murmured Jah-Will.

"Jumbies," murmured Mr. Brown

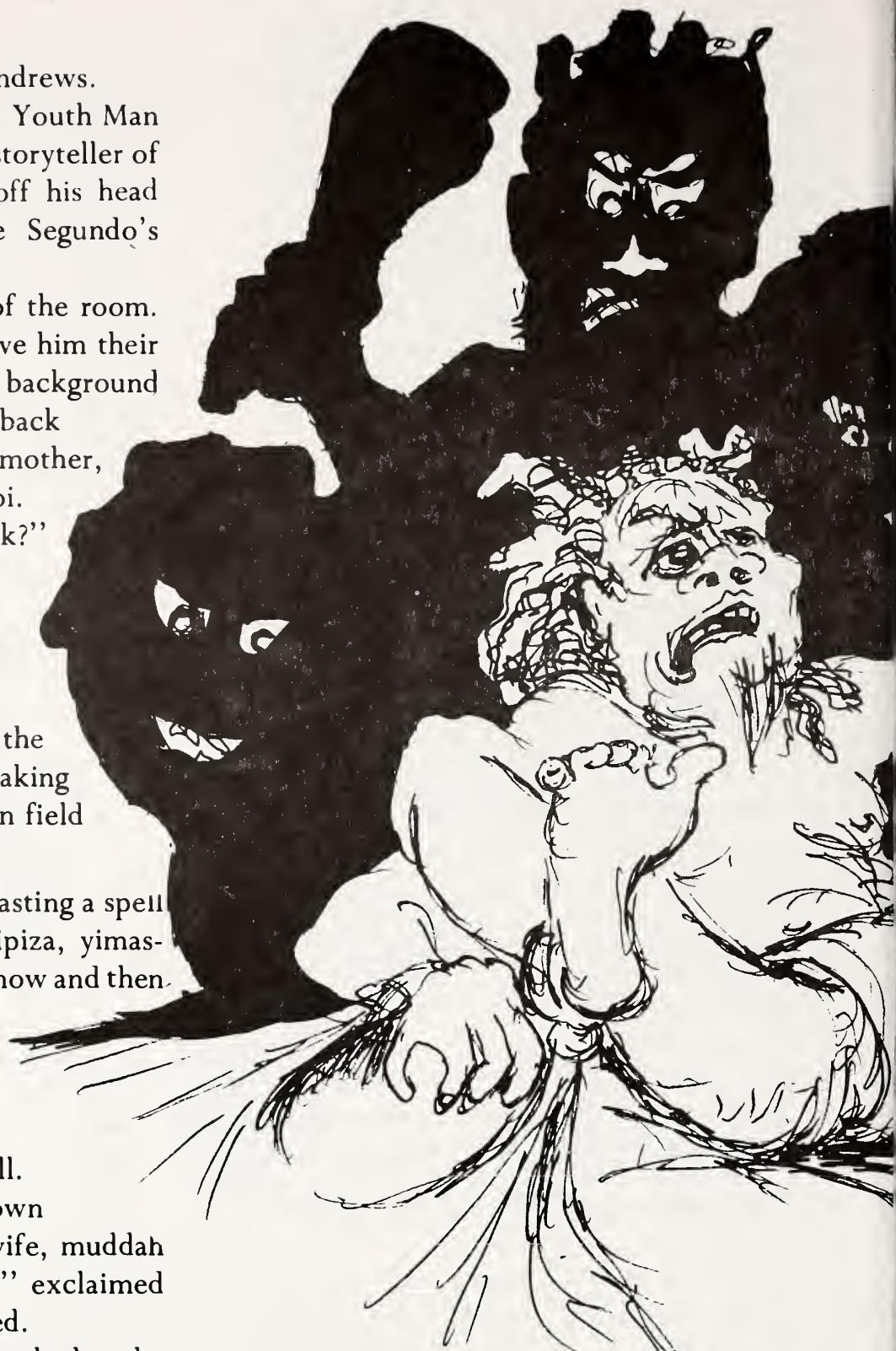
"The ghost of his murdered wife, muddah scunt! She come and haunt him," exclaimed Youth Man. Youth Man was scared.

Felipe Segundo grabbed Samuels by the shoulder and tried to wake him. Samuels continued to scream. Finally Segundo woke up Samuels. Samuels began to cry. Mr. Brown, Segundo, and Andrews tried to comfort him.

"Ain't no such ting as ghosts. He had a nightmare," said Garvey.

Jah-Will shook his head no, "Duppies."

"White ghost gonna get you, Garvey!" insisted Youth Man.



"De white ghost gonna speno de night in Babylon Jail," rapped the Emperor.

**E**veryone was sound asleep. Garvey was dreaming he was King David wearing Joseph's coat of many colors and riding a donkey through Ethiopia with Haile Selassie. His smile spread from ear to ear.



Samuels sleep was tormented.

Andrews woke up, "It's time for the white ghost to come," he said to himself. Andrews wiped the sleep from his eyes and shook Trini on the shoulder.

Trini jumped startled. Together they woke up Felipe Segundo, Martinez, the Emperor, Raymond and Youth Man.

"The white ghost." The word spread through the dorm. Then silence.

Andrews and Trini crept across the floor to David Solomon Garvey's bunk. They insisted everyone wait behind. Andrews went to the bunk on the left Trini to the right.

They took the bottom of Garvey's top sheet and tied the corners to the bunk.

Youth Man began to giggle. Martinez whacked him on the head. Jah-Will rolled over on his side. He was dreaming of a silver chalice filled to the brim with Lamsbread collie.

Andrews pulled the sheet over Garvey's head. Trini took the far corner and simultaneously they tied the sheet to the bunk. Garvey was now secured under the sheet.

Meanwhile the men had been creeping up to Garvey's bunk. He was surrounded. "Remember no blood," Andrews gave the sign. Martinez took his fist and repeatedly chopped at Garvey's kidney. Felipe Segundo leaped in the air and did a knee drop on Garvey's groin. Trini bashed at Garvey's stomach. Andrew's pounded on Garvey's chest. The men were dead silent as each beat a different part of Garvey's body.

Garvey wailed out in pain, kicking his arms and feet to free himself. Finally the sheet ripped. The beating continued. Felipe Segundo and Trini alternately pounded at Garvey's groin.

The guards heard Garvey's scream and turned on the lights. All the men leaped and sprung back into their beds, pretending to be asleep before the guards arrived. Garvey tried desperately to free himself from the sheet.

Keys clanked against the metal door. It opened and officers Smith and Menbubutu entered the dorm.

"Dem beat me up. Dem beat me up!" wailed David Solomon Garvey through his tears.

The guards looked round the room. Andrews was on his back snoring. Jar-Will was still dreaming of the silver chalice. He had slept through the beating. Edwards woke up, sweat dripping from his forehead.

"Who beat you up?" asked Officer Menbubutu.

"Dem beat me up. Dem beat up!" wailed Garvey.

"Who beat you up?" repeated Menbubutu.

"Dem!"

"Them who?"

"All of dem."

"Who?"

"Youth Mon, and de Rasta, and ...."



Officer Smith bopped Youth Man on the shoulder with his night stick.

"No I, no I," protested Youth Man.

"Jah-Will?" questioned Menbubutu.

"Dem beat me up!" wailed Garvey again.

Mr. Andrews spoke, "We'll all be sleep, you check? And the Jumbies come to Garvey in his sleep, and he scream out and he wake us all."

"Duppies," said Jah-Will who was now awake.

"Duppies?" questioned Officer Smith.

"Spirits," answered Officer Menbubutu.

"De white ghost come," said Trini.

"White ghost?" asked Menbubutu.

"De white ghost," repeated Trini.

"Are you sure it wasn't a black ghost?" asked Menbubutu. He glanced at Martinez and Raymond and smiled.

Trini missed the jest. "No suh, it be white ghost," stated Trini very seriously.

"Mr. Garvey, the men say it's ghosts," said Smith.

"Dem beat me! Dem beat me!"

"Senor," interrupted Felipe Segundo. "Me think this man is loco. Un crazy hombre. Me think everybody is crazy."

Youth Man roared in laughter. All the men began laughing.

"He woke us all up," reiterated Mr. Brown.

"We want to go back to sleep," said Samuels.

"The dude's insane," said Raymond.

"Dem beat me! Dem beat me!" screamed Garvey at the top of his lungs. "Dem beat me!"

"Es loco," repeated Segundo.

"We better lock him up in a cell," said Menbubutu. "The men need their sleep."

"We better put Garvey in a cell," agreed Smith. He turned to Garvey, "Collect your things. We're putting you in a cell."

"No, no, no!" screamed Garvey.

"I said, 'let's go,'" ordered Smith.

"No, no, no!" screamed Garvey.

Menbubutu rapped Garvey on the shoulder

with his nightstick. "Move!"

"No, no, no!" screamed Garvey.

Smith grabbed Garvey around the waist and picked him up. "Collect his things," he ordered Menbubutu.

Smith carried Garvey out. Garvey cried and screamed out, "Heathen!"

"Who dem cap fit, let dem wear it!" hollered back Youth Man.

Menbubutu collected Garvey's possessions and carried them out, locking the door behind him. "Good night, gentlemen."

**T**rini and Andrews gave each other a high five, a low five and a high five. "Amen, brother!"

Youth Man rolled over on his back and laughed and laughed, "Amen, brother. No more white ghost gonna come tonight."

"No more tension," Mr. Brown wiped his brow and smiled.

The Emperor stood up on his bunk and began to rap, "Hey men, let me tell you dis tale...."

"Shut up and go to sleep!"

"Todos son locos."

"Insane."

"Iration."

"Amen."







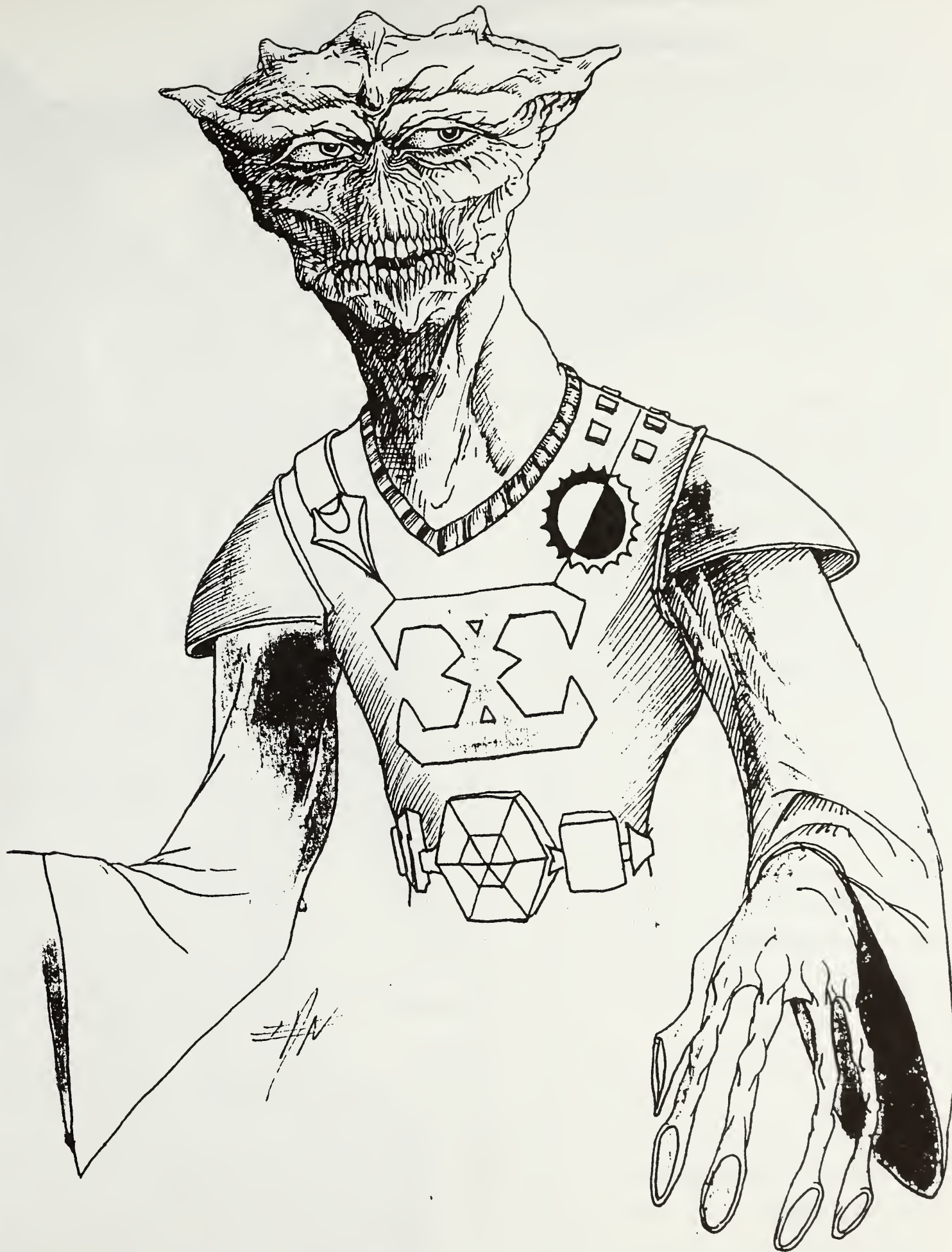


# THE FINAL ALGEBRAIC PRAYER

You are my shepherd; I shall not want.  
You Maketh me to solve Quadratic Equations,  
Factoring everything, but my name.  
In this world of Inequalities,  
You have been risen to the Power of the Exponent.  
And I have been Square Rooted to the Nth Root.  
You who are so huge and a legend in your own mind,  
An Integer of mammoth proportions,  
I beseech you.  
Take pity on this meager mortal Polynomial,  
And accept my humble Inverse Additive Qualities.  
Allow me to free myself of this Radical  
Will the Currents and Miles Per Hour consume me?  
Or is there shelter, for my brain, in the Still Water?  
For our Quadrants are one.  
We live on the same plane of Interest Rates,  
Our Principles are united.  
The size of the Pool has been determined,  
And the Perimeters are in place.  
So let no Systems of Equations come,  
Between me,  
And my grade average.  
Allow my mind and pencil to flow,  
And let my ass pass this class.

MICHAEL SHAYNE







THREE POEMS BY  
NANCY  
MORGEN

MIRROR IMAGE

Mirror, mirror  
on bathroom wall,  
who is that reflected face?

Painted eyes glitter  
under cracked and furrowed  
plasticine brow,  
fragmented face  
staring out at me.  
Have you considered eternity?

Hollow eyes grown  
cynical (cyanidal,  
suicidal?)  
drip  
deadly distillate  
onto gaunt cheeks  
roughed with mockery

Face of stranger  
framed in serpentine  
Medusa hair,  
painted  
eyes that stare through me,  
divining secrecy

Begone, I-know-you-not  
and let me get  
my mascara on.

THE ANHINGA

You see me swim  
as black snake swims  
my head  
breaks the surface,  
moves, as a swimming snake moves  
through mirror-dark waters

Yet I have no venom  
as a snake has  
and no needle-sharp fangs  
only wet feathers  
that drag me down,  
down,  
toward muddy grave  
Yet I move  
with liquid grace  
through tannin-dark water  
neck sways,  
sharp beak darts,  
and I gorge upon  
unsuspecting fish

Replete,  
I swim to lazy shore,  
drag heavy body up,  
stretch sopping wings,  
and hang myself to dry.  
I doze under sun's caress;  
my tree sways  
to wind music





# HENRY FORD'S LEGACY

4:40

Waffle house  
Up ahead of right  
Red Porsche  
Guns his engine  
Darts ahead  
Ten feet

4:41

Businessman  
In three-piece suit  
Raps out orders on  
Bell-South phone  
(Only ninety-nine dollars a month)  
Taps out rhythm  
Fingertips on steering wheel

4:42

Rusty blue VW bug  
Shivers  
Chrome flashed 18-wheeler  
Breathing down his neck  
Dust-choked pines on left  
Suffocate in carbon monoxide  
And gas fumes

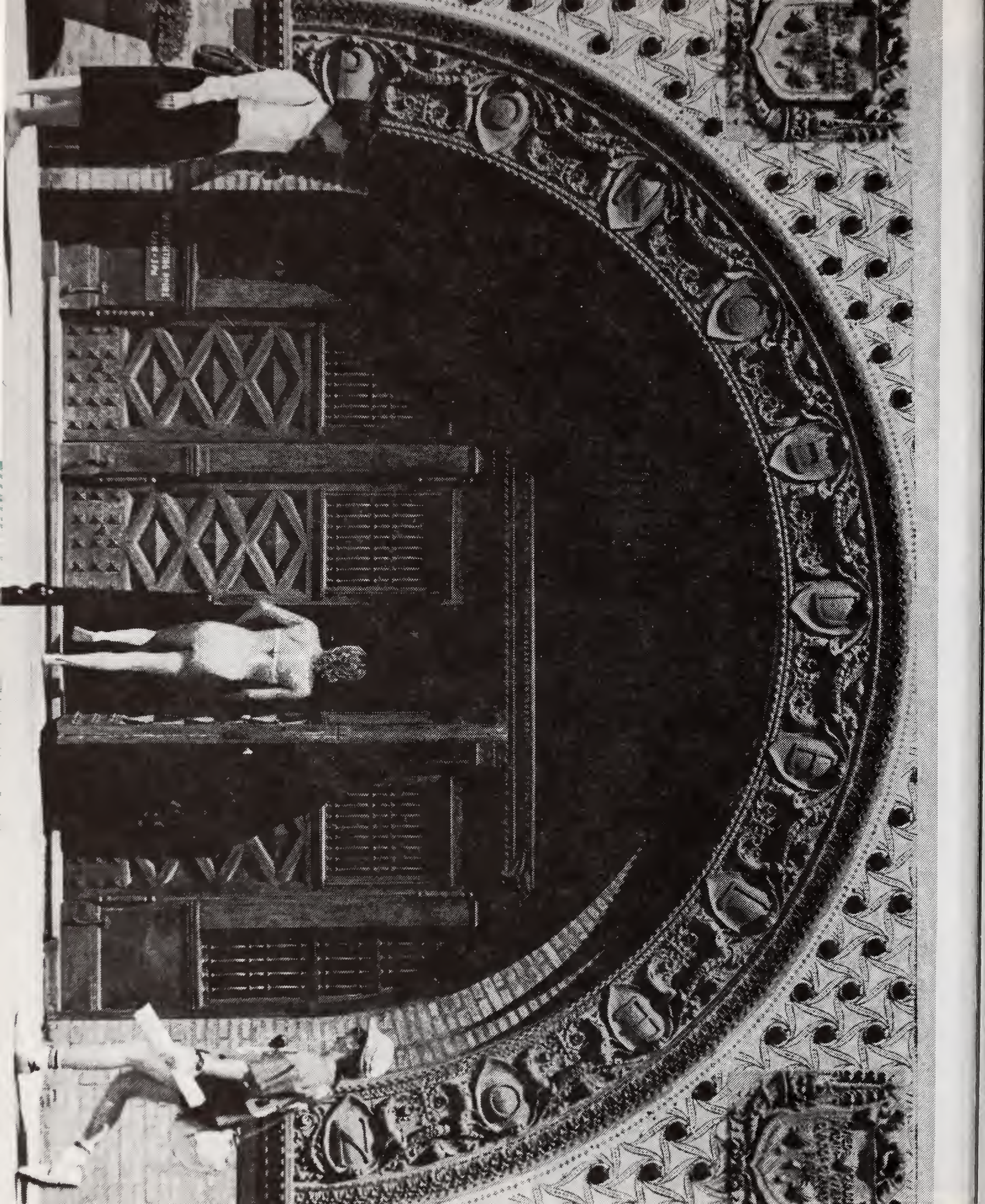
4:49

Three blond surfers  
In open jeep  
Keep time to radio rock  
And creep toward  
The beach

4:54

Waffle house  
Just behind on right









GAIL HOLT





## Marc Kevin Hall

# NEON

**T**he club was packed, even at 2 a.m. I was glad to see it, 'cause I was too tired to try anywhere else that night. I'm a little too old for those games, though I didn't know it at the time.

The only thing I could think about, as I pushed my way to the chrome and glass bar, was that the place looked like a stockyard. A high-tech stockyard, to be sure, but the kids filling the place still looked like cattle to my sensitive eyes.

I gave the red-eyed barmaid a five for a Heineken and headed for an empty table by the dance floor. It was right in front of the speakers, and ripples formed in my beer. That was the price to be paid if I wanted a good view of the evening's selection.

It was a good selection, too. I counted seven likely prospects on the floor without even trying. The first to catch my eye was this girl in an ultra-tight knitted skirt that clung to her ass like saran-wrap. She was dancing with your basic defensive lineman-type, and the cow-eyes she was making at him ruled her out. She was still fun to watch, though.

Then I noticed this fantastic pair of tits in a silvery blouse. The girl looked real fine, but her

eyes were too... I don't know, worldly. Not innocent enough for me.

Cyd Charisse, Jr. was making waves on the dance floor, and the other kids were backing away a little. I saw four other sets of eyes checking her out. Hell, I gave her serious consideration myself until this tough-looking guy grabbed her arm and dragged her out of the club. I don't know if he was her brother, lover or both, but she wasn't worth that kind of effort.

There were a few girls dancing together off to the side. One seemed pretty good, but before I could get a good look at her there was a voice at my side.

"Forget it. She's gay."

I turned, and saw the flash of a Zippo flame. Luscious lips were leaving black lipstick marks on a Turkish cigarette. Thoughts of dancing teenyboppers fled.

"Who..."

"The girl with the classic 'high, firm breasts' that men your age enjoy." Her voice was a darkly rich contralto.

It occurred to me to wonder how she sat down at my table without me hearing anything. It didn't occur to me to wonder how I heard her



over the pounding Van Halen.

"Can I buy you a drink?" I stammered, covering myself as I said it. This girl wouldn't be impressed by money. There was too much silver on her fingers for that.

She smiled, and held up a full glass of something clear. Her teeth flashed blue from the tube lights circling the room.

As she turned back to the dance floor, I checked her out. Long black hair, shaved over her left ear. Pale skin, streaked with blue make-up on her high cheekbones. A long, delicate throat. I thought, incongruously, of vampires. The same kind of high, firm breasts she mentioned before. I couldn't wait to get my hands all over her.

While I was cataloguing possible lines, she turned to me. Her glass was empty.

"Dance?"

"Sure, I'm not *that* old. Just old enough to be better than these kids."

She stood, and we walked to the floor. She was tall, nearly my height, and most of it legs. All of it was muscle, and it was soon apparent that she would outlast me on the dance floor. She had to be a pro - nothing natural has that kind of grace.

A few songs later, she asked the DJ to play something for her. I couldn't recognize the tune, but it was familiar anyway. I felt myself starting to move by instinct, almost against my will. She fell right in with me, keeping her eyes on me almost constantly.

The music kept increasing in speed, volume, and intensity. Somehow, I kept up with it, and her. The crowd cleared out, and something animalistic started in her moves. I was turned on like never before.

When the last chords pounded out of the system, she backflipped across the room and vaulted perfectly into my arms. The crowd went crazy as they poured in around us. She slid luxuriously down my body to the floor, then led me to a table.

When the waitress came over, she whispered something to her, and smiled as the waitress walked away. She returned with two glasses of a clear liquid, without ice.

"What is it?"

"Just cold water. *This* is what's important."

She drew a tiny glass vial from her vest pocket. It was filled with another clear liquid.

"Watch." She poured two drops into her glass, and the water became milky white. She repeated the process for me, then tucked away the vial.

"To entropy."

I puzzled over that for a moment. "Whatever. To entropy, then."

We clinked glasses and drank. It was very bitter, but with a sweet aftertaste.

"What is this?"

"Just a little something I picked up in Europe a few years ago. Very illegal, I imagine. Very strong. Too strong, sometimes, for Americans."

I let that go, so we drank in silence. The DJ was on break.

When we finished, I wanted a beer to get that taste out of my mouth, but before I could order, she spoke.

"Let's go. We've got better things to do."

I didn't argue, and we were soon on our way. At a light, I opened the glove box.

"Want some Peruvian? It's good shit."

"No, thanks. this is fine for me."

I wasn't feeling anything, so I was a little confused. Then we started making a lot of turns as we entered the warehouse district and I started feeling real good. Suddenly, she pointed to an old building.

"Park here."

I hesitated, wondering if my Mercedes would be safe, then pulled in. As she got out of the car, her eyes flashed bright blue in the shadows.

She rounded the corner quickly, and I followed her into an alley lined with metal trash cans and old boxes. She leapt up the rusting fire escape, waiting for me by the door at the top.



The room was very large, and pitch black. This bothered me since there were windows by the door.

"Close the door, and lock it."

I did as she said, and the darkness became complete. I heard cat-like footsteps crossing the room, then the click of a switch. There was a brief electric hum, then the lights came on.

There were neon lights everywhere, all of them blue. Some were obviously scavenged; others were custom-made. They hung from the walls and the ceiling. They were on pedestals, tables, shelves. All shapes, all sizes, and all blue.

Not much else was in the room. There was a small table in the dinette in the back, and a huge mound of black pillows in the center of the floor. She motioned toward the pillows as she entered the dinette, returning with a glass and a carafe of wine. It looked blue in the light.

She handed me the wine and the glass, then walked through the only other door into the bathroom. I poured myself a glass and washed the taste out of my mouth. The wine was excellent, but I couldn't place the vintage. I started to relax.

Two glasses later, the lights began to flash. Not all at once, but each with its own rhythm, creating a mesmerizing effect. I never heard the door open.

Suddenly, she was standing in front of me, clad from neck to ankle in a black silk kimono. The silk reflected the light eerily. I drank more wine. Then she smiled fully, for the first time, and opened the kimono.

Her body was covered with weird blue marks. There were slashes of iridescent blue along her ribs. Azure lines circled her dark nipples. Long wide strokes crossed her taut stomach, while delicate swirls decorated her thighs. She was physically flawless, but somehow the blue lines enhanced the effect.

I reached for her, and her hands met mine. With surprising ease, she lifted me to my feet, then kissed me. I felt a shock run through me,

then I lost all reason.

I can only remember bits and pieces of the hours that followed: a vision of her face above mine, shrouded in shadow; her eyes were shining. I remember a sound like shattering crystal -her laughter when I asked her name. And I remember the last thing she said to me, as I was drifting, satisfied, into sleep.

"I am everything you never wanted again."

When I woke up, I was sweating like mad. I looked around, and I was alone. I went into the tiny, cramped bathroom and washed my face and hands.

On coming out, I tried to open a window, but they were painted shut with the same black paint that covered the glass. It was getting hotter every minute, so I dressed quickly and left.

My Mercedes was miraculously untouched. I got in, and made a mental note of the address. This was one woman worth seeing again.

I found my way back to my townhouse and showered off. Then headed to the club for some tennis. On the way, though, I realised I wasn't going to tell the guys about this one. After losing three straight sets, I called it quits.

While driving home, I decided to stop at a nursery. I bought a dozen orchids, then changed course, heading for the warehouse district.

I found the address easily enough, but when I knocked, an old fat woman started screaming at me in Italian. I peered around her into the room, where three dirty children and a dog watched He-Man on TV. I backed away quickly, retreating to my car.

I retraced my course, and drove for hours looking, without luck. Eventually I had to give up.

I went back to that bar every night for two weeks; I went home alone every time and drank myself to sleep.

Oh, yeah, I gave the orchids to a bunch of cheerleaders having a car wash.



# # SEVENTY ONE

Undaunted by the captain,  
 She does barre exercises  
 On the starboard side  
 Pointed toes skim the tide  
 A celebration of dawn  
 Somehow the lies flow  
 They entangle themselves in the web  
 Of your unconscious  
 Woven to deny,  
 What you don't know won't hurt you  
 Not so, unless you're the *Faerie Queene*  
 Flaxen hair, don't ask  
 Hush, the coming is near  
 Heretics, Jesus freaks  
 A Calliope, she will sing for you  
 With the sweetness of a mockingbird  
 How can you say you're original?

Carbon copies, all of us  
 Blue ink smeared on her face  
 Embrace the concept if you dare  
 Risk your sanity in the glass maze  
 Drawn through, only by the chanting  
 Not unlike witches' coven  
 In broad daylight  
 Don't blink  
 You might miss something.

# # SEVENTY TWO

Wanton  
 Like a woman of the night  
 Standing on the corner  
 Hailing Taxis  
 Destination  
 A silken ruffle accompanied  
 She will smile for you  
 Reciprocation of a different breed  
 Mongrel—like, latent cowardice  
 Snarls and claws  
 A breakfast for carnivores  
 Flesh  
 Lacking substance  
 Standing on the corner  
 Hailing taxis  
 In search of nothing  
 Definitely something  
 A feeling  
 Cold steel  
 Against the nape of your neck  
 Snarls and claws  
 Standing on the corner  
 With Jones  
 Green and white cruisers cruise  
 Glaring at the cat  
 From inside their little boxes  
 Whizzing through the neon  
 The wind grows colder  
 Invisible sleet  
 The fur coat keeps you warm  
 You and Jones,  
 Standing on the corner in the rain  
 Hailing taxis.



## # SEVENTY THREE

The derelict sleeps on the park bench  
Catching the goldfish by night  
The crimson rouge lights up your face

Dear

Chasing your blues away

Are we safe? We're never safe

As long as we walk the line

What line? Depends...

What did you say your name was?

The poor folks ride the bus downtown

Take me home right now

James

I can't wait to sharpen my claws

And lick my wounds.

## # SEVENTY FOUR

Whispers

Like flames crackling in dry grass.

A sort of hiss not foreign to June

A divorce of sorts, an aria for the Glades.

Utter sweet nothings in her ear,

Ravage her dreams

Spend Saturday night dancing in the tall reeds.

Breaking promises, swallowing her words

Spitting it all back out

Black

Hissing at them, devouring her

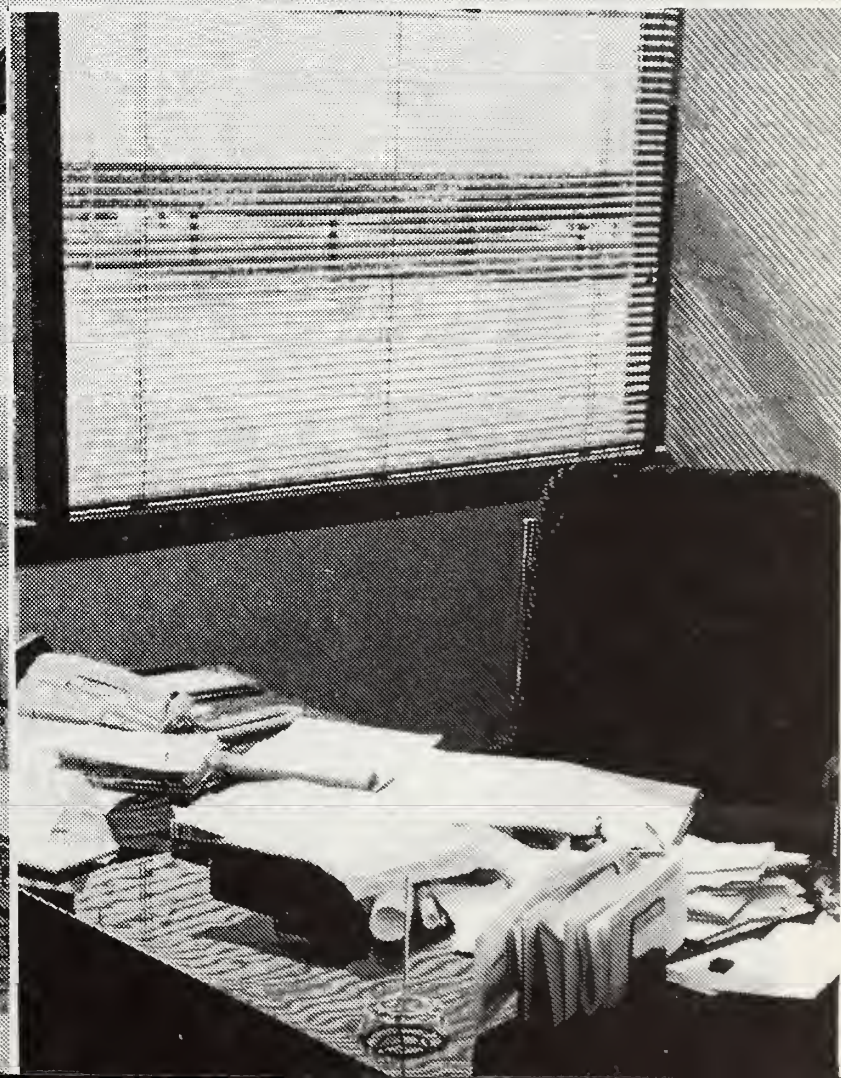
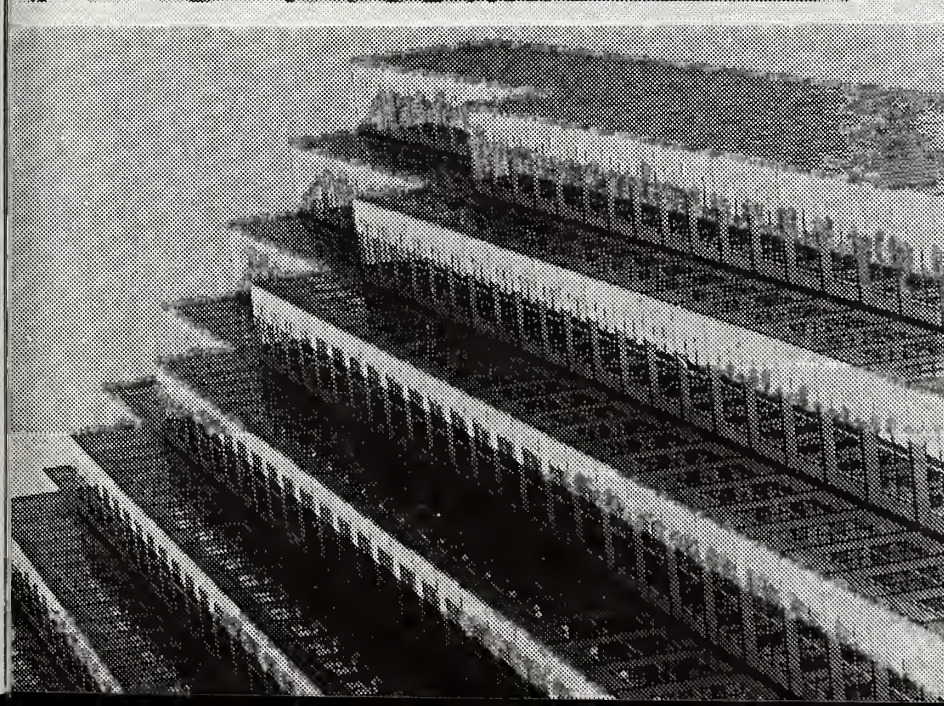
With that neon waltz that you do.

Lying through your teeth

Flames crackling in dry grass

The reaper's diva, a bright soprano.











J. D. Taylor

# SHADOW

**P**eals of drunken laughter faded to death behind the townhouse door as it shut behind her. Hugging her woolen coat closer around her to guard against the chilling night wind, she stepped down to the empty sidewalk and began to walk, happy to leave the raucous party behind her. With no direction in her thoughts or in her steps, she walked to the corner, past the streetlamp, toward the waterfront. Icy fingers of the wind blew past her ears and in its eerie whisper she thought she heard her name. When she turned around to see who had the nerve to disturb the peace she sought, she found no one behind her, only the streetlamp and the sidewalk and the wind. She turned forward and resumed her aimless stroll but stopped short when she noticed a dark figure standing not ten feet before her. The girl drew her breath in a gasp upon a closer look at the stranger. Surely he hadn't been there just seconds before, and surely he was the most beautiful man she had ever seen.

With one shoulder leaned against the pole and one long leg crossed in front of the other, he took his last inhalation from the cigarette he held between two slim white fingers before lifting his strong, pointed chin to look at her. The cool gaze of dark eyes that hid nothing in their depth, yet revealed even less, commanded her to speak.

"E-excuse me... sir..., but could you please tell me the time?"

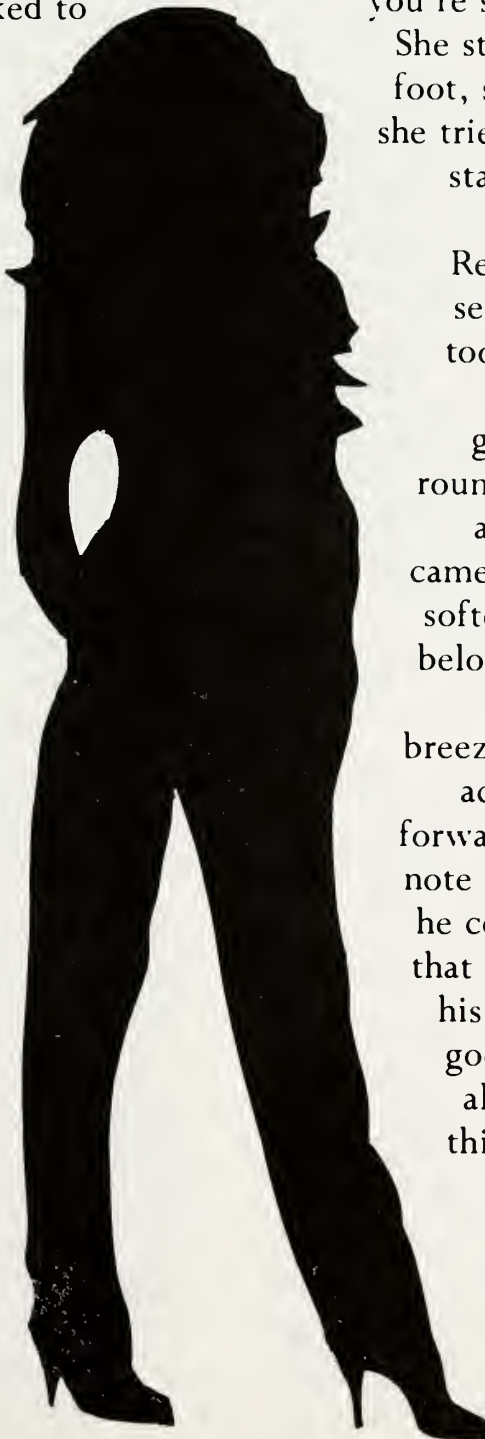
With slow, deliberate gestures, he pulled a gold pocket watch from his long, dark coat, glanced down at it for a few seconds, placed it back in his coat, then raised his eyes to look at her again. His voice was low and smooth and flowed with liquid warmth into her ears.

"Half past eleven. Is there somewhere you're supposed to be?"

She stepped forward with one small foot, squinting her pale blue eyes as she tried to peer more closely at him standing in the shadows. "Yes... well, no... I was, but...."

Realizing her stammers made no sense, she stopped, then bravely took a few more steps and stood very close to him now. Thick golden lashes framed the large, round eyes that stared at him with apprehensive curiosity. A flush came to the round, white face that softened into a dimpled point just below rose-petal lips shaped like a cupid's bow. A silent passing breeze blew a strand of yellow curl across her brow and he reached forward to brush it away. A sudden note of fear danced in her eyes and he could hardly suppress the smile that tried to break the even line of his pale lips. In her he had found goodness, light, and warmth and all things that were beautiful in this world and beyond. The pale glow of the moon surrounded her face like a halo and the darkness of the night cleared the path to let her pass.

She spoke and her





voice poured into his ears like the music of a thousand seraphim.

"I mean, I was somewhere before... and was going to go back. But, I don't think I will now. No, I don't think I will." The last line was stated as if something had just occurred to the girl that fed her newfound confidence in her actions. She stood a little taller now and moved a few feet closer to the stranger. He let her come.

He had thrown his cigarette to the ground and its glowing tip died there. With lowered eyes, he watched it and he knew she did the same. "You're welcome to walk with me," he said and held out his hand.

She let him take her small, pink hand in his and though his was cold she did not try to let go. They began to walk with slow measured steps that echoed through the empty street. She kept her pace beside him, studying his form from head to foot.

His age was indiscernible, she found. The skin on his face was smooth and tight, the few deep lines around his eyes and mouth only added to his perfect beauty and gave no clue as to the number of his years. And though his face looked young, something in his stance and in his stride and in his eyes spoke of lifetimes more than any man would know. He walked as if he owned each block of street he set his foot upon, yet she knew she'd never seen him in this part of town before. Expensive leather loafers on his feet, a white cotton shirt, black denim jeans, all of these things might be worn by any man. Yet the long, black coat he wore, and the pocketwatch he carried, and the manner of his speech all belonged in some romantic gothic novel or an attic photograph. He was very strange indeed, and he frightened her, yet she knew that he would tell her not to be afraid. The silence made her uneasy so she spoke.

"You're a stranger here?"

"Oh, no, my beauty," he smiled. "I've been here quite a while. But you are usually asleep and dreaming by the time I leave my home."

"That's possible," she said and covered her

mouth in a silent yawn while remembering her parents' admonishments to obey her midnight curfew. "I'm not used keeping such late hours. Yet I feel that I'm missing part of the world by shutting my eyes so early in the night."

"I'm well acquainted with the night," he said. "I'd be more than happy to show you what it holds."

He saw the fear return to her eyes and a sudden rush of blood darken her smooth pink cheeks. A shiver of delight ran through him as he realized the value of the treasure he had found this night. The vulnerable innocent always been his prey and his expertise at toying with their fear and with their trust had never failed to amuse him before the climax of it all. But this one let herself be led by him with such childlike innocence, rare sweetness he had never before tasted.

Still, her intellect was sound enough to present a challenge to him. This one was to be savored, for he might never find such an angel again.

She walked beside him silently, looking





straight ahead. The waterfront was visible now, just a few blocks away. She felt his demon eyes trace every golden curl that fell upon her shoulders and the movement of her skirt as she took each small step forward. Perhaps she had been foolish to leave the warmth and safety of her friends at the townhouse party behind her. She had no valid reason to trust this stranger, yet did that give her reason to fear him?

"It's not wise, you know, to walk with strangers along deserted streets." Had he read her mind?

"Have I reason to fear you?" she asked.

"If you had, you'd be too late for escape now anyway," he answered.

She considered this for a moment and he relished watching the thoughts cloud her clear angel eyes.

"Perhaps," she said after a while. "Still, my screams would waken at least a few people in the apartments above us. And though I'm small, I can put up quite a good fight."

"Perhaps," he smiled and nodded slowly.

To his delight, she continued. "But if my screams were stifled, and you meant to do me harm, and my kicks and scratches weren't enough, then I suppose you'd have me." She stated this with great resolve and no trace of unease thinning her clear voice.

"Yes, my beauty," he smiled, genuinely surprised by her calm acceptance of such possibilities. "Yes I would. And that prospect does not frighten you?"

"Well, I've been taught," she explained, "that, if you behave the way you should and love your fellow man, that a great reward awaits you after life."

He begged for elaboration on her version of immortal rewards. She sensed that he was making fun of her and her small voice filled with reproach. "Sir, you don't believe in what I'm saying and you question me only for your own amusement!"

"Forgive me, my beauty, for being so rude,"

he laughed and his laugh was low and throaty and sent a chill through her. "It's only that I find your unusual outlook so refreshing. Such steadfast faith I've not encountered for quite a long time. Yes, my beliefs differ, but then my life's far from what yours will ever be." Again his long, white hand reached toward her and he stroked the golden curls that framed her face and though his touch quickened her pulse, she made no move to stop him. She became certain her trembling had little to do with the frigid night wind; it increased each time the words, "my beauty" touched her ears.

They had reached the waterfront. Not very crowded through most of the day, by night the docks were desolate and lit only by the faint yellow glow from a single lamp. The wind pushed the water to slap upon the sides of the dock on which they stood. The light from the lamp danced choppily across the black water below them. A bell from a distant buoy cried lonely in the night and they were the only ones to hear.

"Perhaps I should start home," she said "It's getting much too late." She turned and started to walk back from the docks.

"It's past your time already," he said. "What are a few hours more?"

He curved his arm around her shoulder and without much force pulled her back toward him.

She shivered at his touch and stepped from beneath his arm. He let her go and they circled each other slowly until he stood between the girl and the path leading off from the dock. She was breathing deeply now, waiting for him to move or speak. He did nothing, only stood there waiting too.

"Tell me who you are," she said with a brave attempt to control the shaking in her voice.

"Trust me, my beauty," he said, "and you've no need to know."

She tried to keep her distance from him and found herself backing toward the edge of the dock. For every step she retreated, he came



forward until she stopped just inches from the edge.

"You back away. Are you afraid of me?" His voice was gentle yet her heart pounded and her breath was short.

So unearthly seemed his beauty now. His raven curls were tousled by the wind, his lips set firmly in a cool, smug smile and the worn cliche of eyes that pierced found new meaning in his gaze.

"You shiver from the wind," he said and slowly reached his arms toward her. His long coat billowed in the wind behind him like a cape. "Come let me shield you from the cold."

His voice called to her, as did his burning eyes and outstretched arms and very soul. Without a move, he drew her forward, pulled with a force she could not escape. Her mind screamed not to go, to run, do anything to tear herself away.

Tears streamed from her wide eyes as she inched slowly toward him. He took not one step forward, only whispered, "Yes, my beauty. Come."

"Please, sir," she pleaded, "take me home. I'm feeling very weak and I..." Before she could finish, he locked his sinuous arms around her weakening frame. With every ounce of strength she could gather, she struggled beneath his unyielding grip. She soon realized her attempts were futile, still her feeble struggling continued and in a soft, strained whisper she begged to know, "Who are you?"

"Hush, my beauty," he lulled, and his long, white fingers encircled her pulsing throat. She became weaker and her struggling slowly waned. Her lips barely moving, she began to softly pray. "Our Father, Who art in Heaven..."

The full moon cast a ghastly glow upon his face.

"Thy kingdom come..." Her whispers were barely audible, her lips barely moving. The bell tolled in the distance.

"But deliver us from evil." Her eyes fought to keep their gaze upon him.

"May God... grant... mercy... to... you." Her whisper was carried from her trembling lips into the wind and out among the stars over the sea.

The girl collapsed in his embrace and he remained perfectly still for a long while. His eyes squeezed shut, his lashes wet, his nose nestled in her honey-fragrant hair.

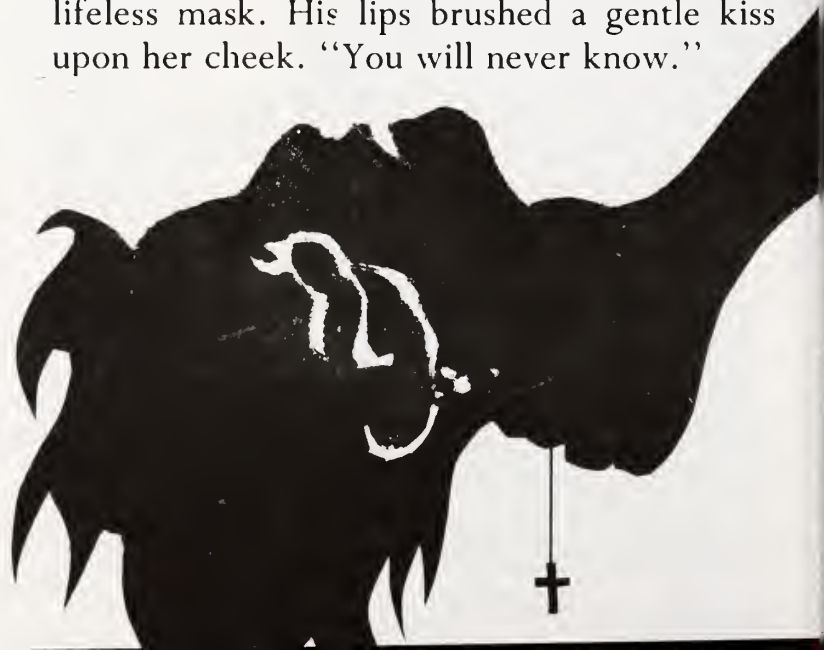
Mercy.

He held her still, limp body in his arms and in the shadows they stood a silhouette of lovers in an embrace. Gently, he lifted her ragdoll form up into his arms and her head tilted back, letting the pale moon glow upon her smooth, white throat. Glistening tears still wet her paling cheeks. He stepped slowly to the very edge of the dock and held her body out over the cold, black water that churned below. A cool breeze blew a soft, blonde curl across her cheek and he held the strand of gold between his fingers and savored his last glimpse of the angel's face. Her arm swung from her awkwardly and a silver ring slipped from her little finger and quickly became engulfed with a splash in the darkness below. A gap of silence waited for the ring's owner to follow.

"Who are you?" she had whispered, verging on death.

"My beauty," he said aloud slowly now, for nobody to hear, "You will never know."

The bell sung sadly in the night. He did not shiver though the wind was cold. His dark eyes fell upon the cherub's face, almost smiling in its lifeless mask. His lips brushed a gentle kiss upon her cheek. "You will never know."





# THREE SHORT POEMS BY TEARS

Tears are but seasoned water  
tasting of salt  
'though peppered with pain.

## "I'M SORRY"

"I'm sorry"  
is a pencil eraser  
wiping out just so many mistakes  
before wearing down  
down  
scratch  
rip  
CUT!

## JUSTICE

Killed Mr. Bear 'cause  
Mr. Bear ate Mr. Wolf  
Killed Mr. Wolf 'cause  
Mr. Wolf ate Madam Hen  
Killed Madam Hen 'cause  
Madam Hen ate Baby Worm  
Mrs. Jones-alive and well  
in alligator shoes,  
snake belt  
and chinchilla coat

JUANITA HARMON



# JACOB'S SONG

Brat that you are

You have tried my patience today  
Pulled the string of my endurance  
'Til it would give no longer

Dear that you can be

With pleading eyes you affect me  
And all the peace you have destroyed is forgotten  
While I hold you close, my son

Ruffian and bully

The cat hides when you bellow  
Poor dog; she can find nothing to crawl under  
While you barrel towards them

I have a snapshot

As the dog slept, your head lay  
On her side as you gently stroked the cat  
My three little angels asleep

My son that you are

You ride the spectrum of good and evil  
Like a hobby horse, crazed with ambition and yearning  
And I must keep pace.

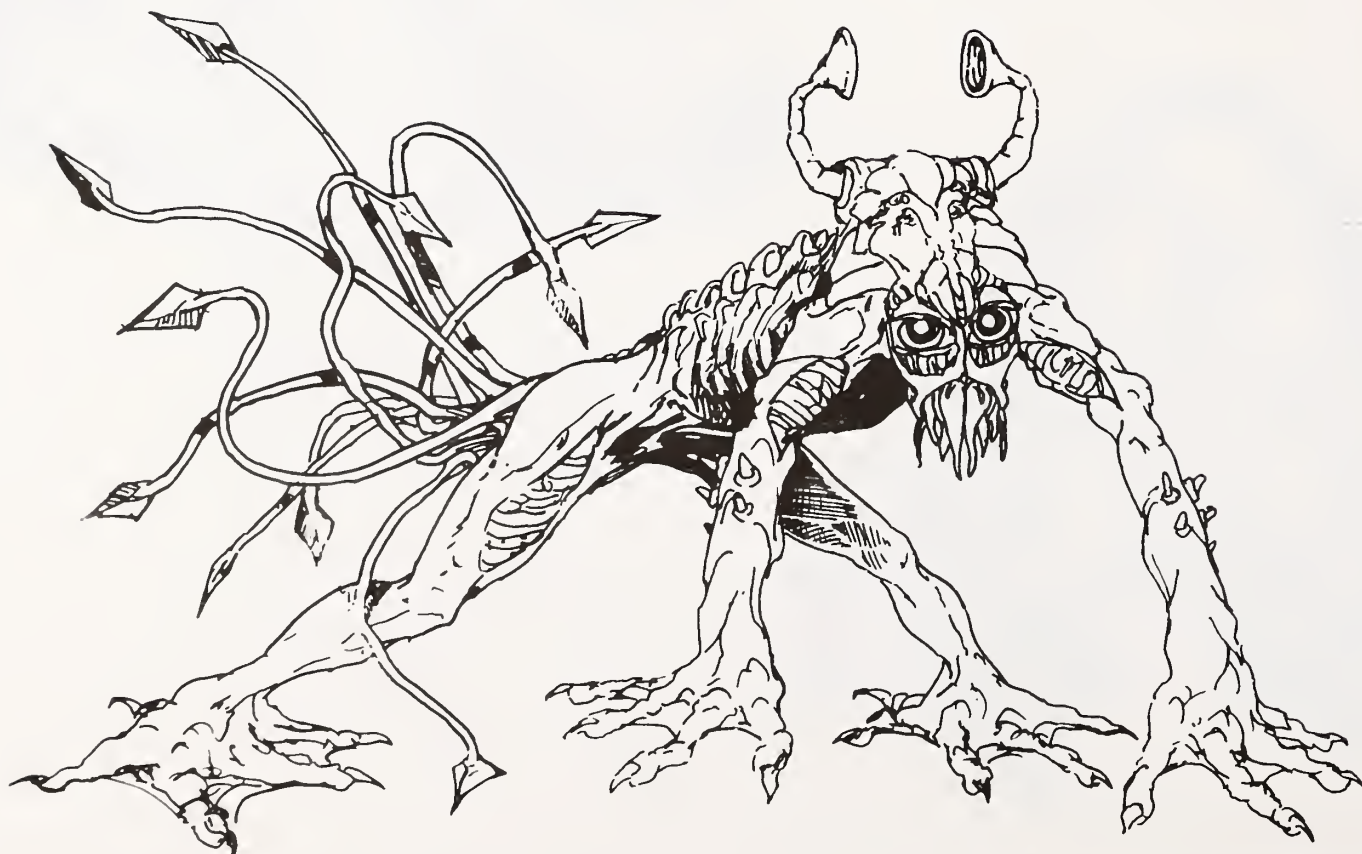
BARBARA SCHAEFFER





Evan Steinman (various sizes, some ink, some ink and wash)











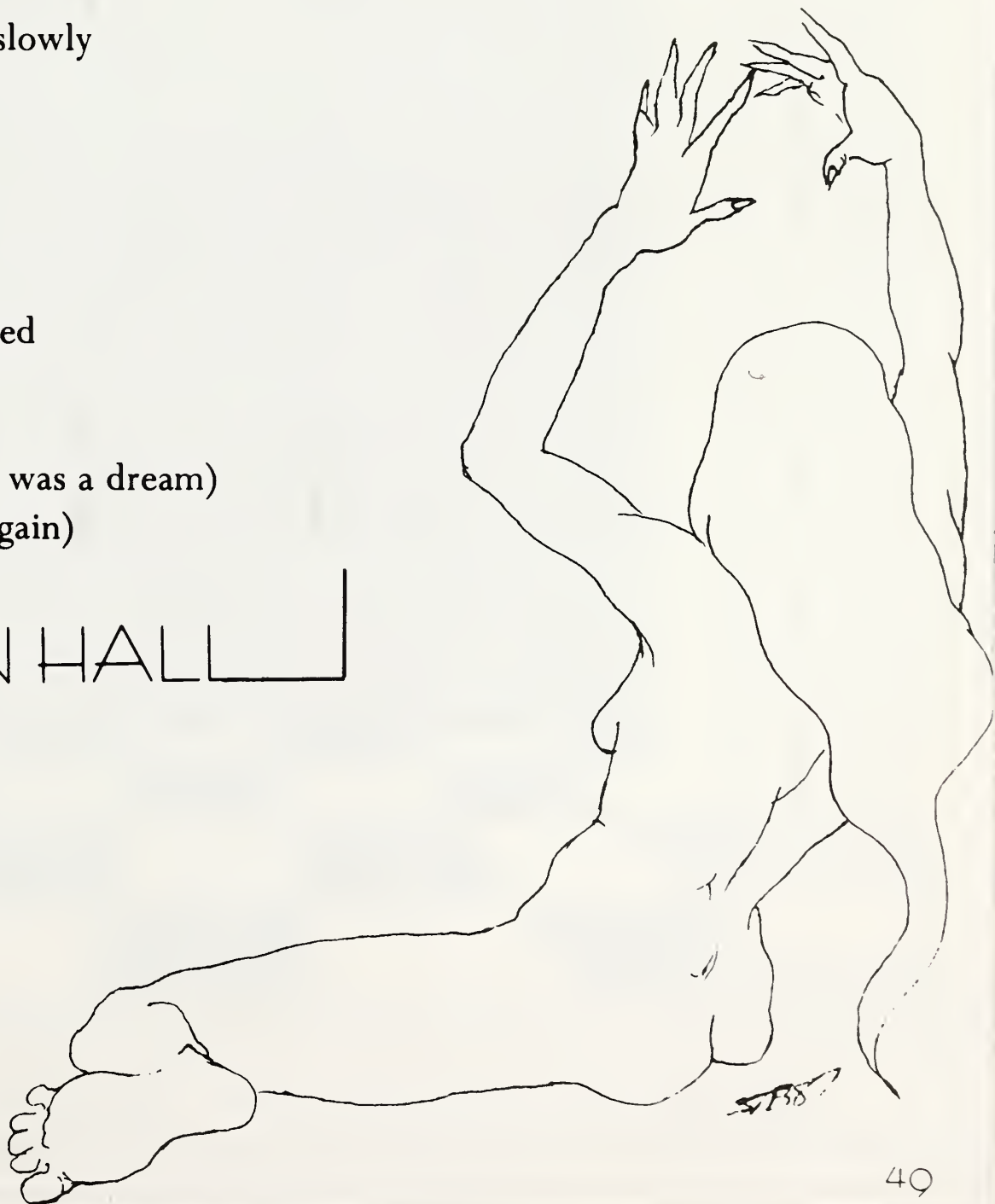




# UNTITLED POEM BY

mid-night awakening  
sleep-darkness gives way to  
grey-white suburban chiaroscuro  
rising from my child-bed  
instinct draws me to the  
star-lit kitchen  
(silver sink shines  
window blinds drawn wide  
shadowed lawn outside)  
brilliance from the sky  
soft shapes shifting slowly  
silently seducing me  
saucers!  
fear-frozen, I watch  
forms fade  
flow and ebb  
I watch, and am watched  
lights go  
as I  
(years later, I realize it was a dream)  
(later still, I wonder, again)

MARC KEVIN HALL






DE  
NATURA  
PRINCIPIS MANTUAE

[NOTA BENE: This anonymous bawdy 18th century mock epic reconstituted from fragments locked in a chest recently discovered in the attic of an old manor house in Devonshire England by an ex-patriate English English professor at BCC who is solely responsible for all the offense it will certainly cause & who also wishes to give reluctant credit to that anti-semite sleaze-bag s\*d\*mite' Roger Peyrefitte, the French writer of "The Prince's Person" (trans. by Peter Fryer, Secker & Warburg, 1964) who in less elegant prose than these masterful heroic couplets, tercets, quatrains, & Neo-Classical verses that follow this long notice of authorship, editorship & flagrant plagiarism, told the same story derived from different sources, describes historically true events & personages (if they can be so-called) & places & times, & constitutes a shocking indictment of the depths of depravity to which the late-Renaissance Roman Catholic Church & the Italian nobility had sunk by the late 16th century - though the escapades of the Bakkers, Robertson, Hahn, Falwell & Swaggart suggest the American evangelical heirs of Luther & Calvin are no worthier than their Salem or Papal forebears in much the same way that Bork is no heir to Blackstone, in contrast to Hart & Rice or Ginsburg whose newscatching frolics merely lack discretion.]



## PROLOGUE


n ribald Rhyme, a BAWDY TALE I tell;  
The Players now, me thinks, reside in HELL.  
So unafear'd of VENGEANCE, we can gaze  
Upon their SINS & thus ourselves amaze.

With Homage to our Poets, POPE & SWIFT -  
Their STYLE I travest & their RHYMES I lift -  
But, 'cause I write of Subjects LEWD & COARSER,  
My model is the Bard, one GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

Read, Dear Friends, the true but scabrous Saga  
Of youthful DON VINCENZO GONZAGA,  
Alias the "noble" Prince of Mantua.  
(Be he TOM THUMB or great GARGANTUA?)

So here begins my injudicious Verse.  
I pray you, HUSH, before you BOO & CURSE,  
& when I end, Nay! Gently with the Hearse -  
Admit, you've Done, or Seen, or Heard FAR WORSE.

## CANTO PRIMO

ransport your minds-eye, hide behind this arch  
( 'Tis FIFTEEN EIGHTY ONE, the second March)  
Under Corregio's "Blessed Virgin"  
See Don Vincenzo wed (with little urgin')  
To tight-lipped DONNA MARGHERITA FARNESE,  
For whom, alas, came Nothing very easy,  
Grand-daughter to the aging DUKE of PARMA,  
Who leads the Bride & vows that nought'll harm her.  
No finer Bride & Groom in Italy are seen:  
He is Nineteen & She just turned Fourteen.



*The Nuptials continue for all two Weeks -  
But no rose-red lusters the bridal Cheeks.  
Alas, her tearful Eyes have turned STARK PINK,  
Elsewhere has parted neither WINK nor CHINK.  
What her FUNCTION is, the Princess dares not think.*

*The Mantuans adamantly asserted  
That in some Sockets nought could be inserted;  
Or that the VIA AMORA was contorted.  
With outraged Pride the Parman sons retorted:  
"Either the Gonzaga Person is deformed  
Or his Princely Manhood is short-formed!"  
But either way His Highness's Member  
Had failed to spark a single Farnese Ember  
& May had spent, for now it was December.*



## CANTO SECONDO



*On such AFFAIRS, it seems the Years can flee  
'Tis April 'leven, FIFTEEN EIGHTY THREE.  
The Parties bring the Problem to the Papal See,  
Where Doodles overflow the Marginalia  
Of the notepads of the Holy Cardinalia.  
His Holiness, the Pope, the Thirteenth Gregory,  
Holds a privy session of the Consistory.  
The Pope's Son, a General of the Church  
("We never leave a BASTARD in the lurch!")  
Closes the Papal Portals on the Throng;  
No-one now may enter, save the Lord of Wrong.  
Two Clerks are there to minute the Disputes,  
& thirty gaudy Cardinals - (God's Boots!  
Much Good in them all History refutes.)  
"There's seven vacant Bishoprics to fill;*



*Six heretics we MUST agree to Kill.  
No problem there, I concensually hope!  
So: 'Quid vobis videtur?' quoth the Pope.  
The VENAL Cardinals rise as one to vote;  
They lift their Hats, the Motions pass by rote.*

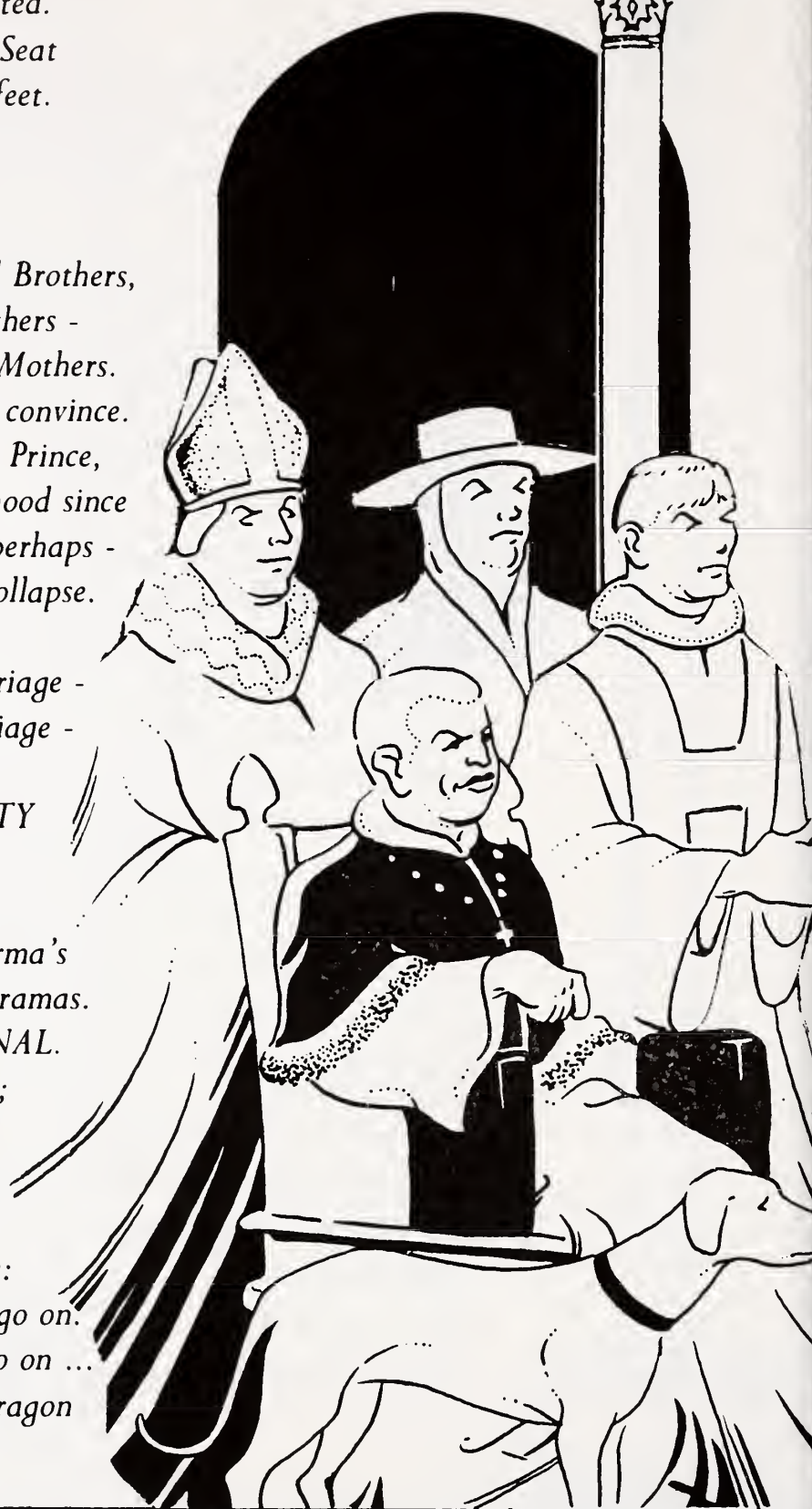
*At last appears our ITEM of AGENDUM:  
The Prince's MEMBER & the staunch PUDENDUM,  
Discreetly writ in Latin for the shy:  
"De Natura Principis Mantuae  
Et Minutiae Vulvarum Parmae."*

*The Medics' notes are detailed but conflicting;  
The Cardinals themselves are contradicting.  
Tales about the Prince's am'rous prowess . . .  
A Ballerina & a trim-coifed Prioress,  
A Dancer (male) from far away Spitzbergen,  
Attest, sans doubt, the Prince to be no Virgin.  
The Parman Family has that mastered:  
"The Prince has never fathered Bastard."  
But then the Mantuans play a powerful card:  
"A well-respected Doctor from Capri  
Has testified beyond a doubt that he  
Has cur'd (with skill) a Notable from Spain,  
Who'd suffer'd from the POX & all its pain,  
Which he had from a High-Class WHORE contracted,  
'Pon whom the Prince DEFLOWERMENT had enacted."  
But still the Parmans fail to be distracted;  
The Battle is both Heated & Protracted.  
Hours pass without a single ISSUE solved,  
& still the vexing PROBLEM'S unresolved.*





*"Enough! You'll never win," the Pope entreated.  
 "For hours and hours we've all been seated."  
 Donning his Mitre, he rose from off his Seat  
 & where no Angel'd dare, he trod both feet.  
 "In the NAME of the TRINITY,  
 With the PATIENCE of DIVINITY,  
 We've heard this CASE of VIRGINITY.  
 We have heard Advice from our Beloved Brothers,  
 The Cardinals of the Holy Church, & others -  
 Advice that'd break the Hearts of most Mothers.  
 Counsel for Donna Margherita does not convince.  
 Much has been said of the person of the Prince,  
 But no Grounds exist to doubt his Manhood since  
 Evidence has been produc'd - shameful perhaps -  
 But admissible, evidence that does not collapse.  
 'Tis unlikely he'll suffer a relapse.  
 Ergo! The non-Consummatio of the marriage -  
 NIHIL CONCEPTIO, let alone Miscarriage -  
 Cannot conceivably lead us to disparage  
 Don Gonzaga; or to imagine a DEBILITY  
 Directly effecting his VIRILITY  
 Thus resulting in Marital STERILITY.  
 On the other hand, our Daughter of Parma's  
 An intact Hymen - single cause of our dramas.  
 IT denies her the chance to be MATERNAL.  
 We forbid they live Sororal & Fraternal;  
 'Tis a MORTAL SIN to use the Anal  
 Orifice for Penetration the Prince is  
 Prone to Practice on the Poor Princess.  
 So take this down verbatim, Amanuensis:  
 'The family name, Mantua, must go on.  
 Thus now We suggest, cajole, & so on ...  
 That Our Beloved Daughter, a Paragon*





POST HASTE retire to a CLOISTER to pray.  
IPSO FACTO, the Marriage is ANNULLED Today.  
So the Prince is FREE to remarry, ' we say.  
So, 'Quid Vobis Videtur?' ' vied the Pope.

All then jumped up, the Hats flew off - no trope,  
But were we there, we'd all have wanted Rope!

### CANTO TERZO

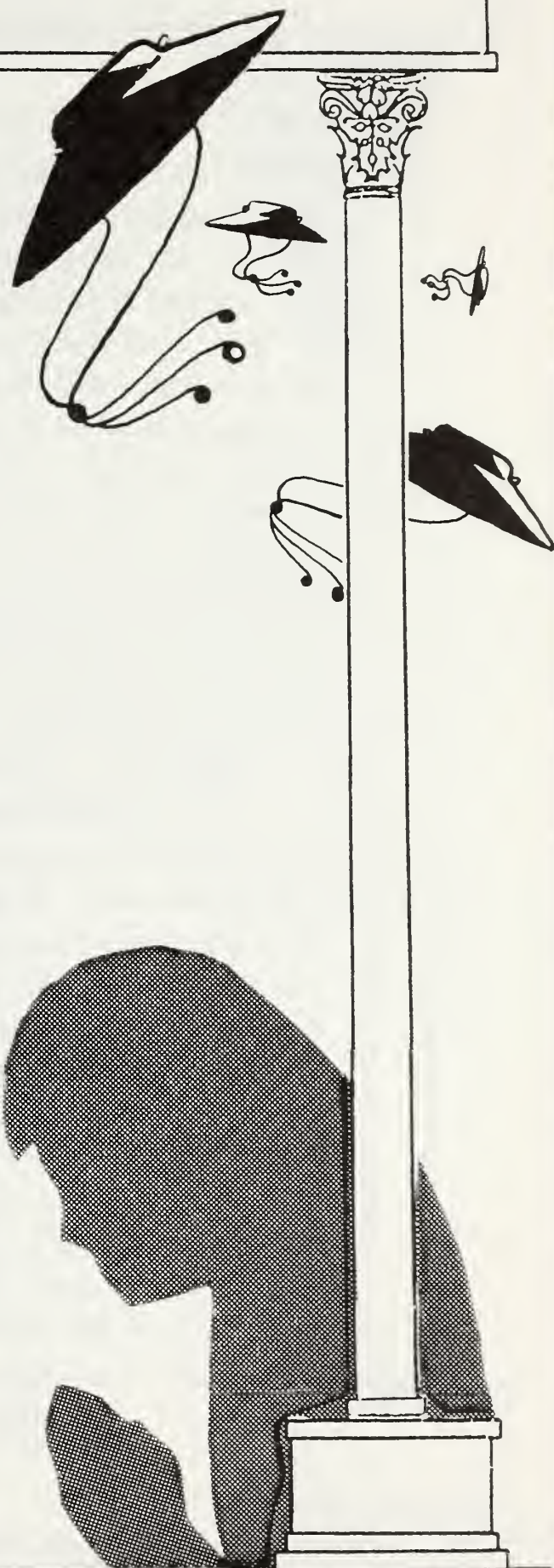


ct. 29, in Fifteen Eighty Three,  
For shame that the're so few who've come to see  
Our Donna Margherita, as she stood  
While the Abbot arranged her Benedictine Hood.  
In the stained-glass-lit Chapel of St. Paul.  
You see her Teardrops sparkle as they fall  
& mingle with the cuttings of her hair;  
& hear her Heartbreak Sobbing as you near.  
She wears on her pinky a Ring of Gold,  
Symbol of Marriage to the Heavenly Fold.  
Leave her to her SORROW, wish her ev'ry JOY,  
With BIBLE as BEDMATE & ROSARY as TOY.

### CANTO QUARTO



Now't falls upon the Poet to REVEAL  
So far is but ONE TURN upon the WHEEL.  
Pray keep your Seat & still th'impatient Mind,  
While I a few more SCROFULOUS Rhymes find.  
The Hunt began to find another Wife  
For the Prince to fill a Hollow in his Life.  
When a Dowry's large & it's MEDICI  
Who cares they are no ORPHEO & EURIDICI,  
TRISTAN & ISOLDE, or DANTE & BEATRICI.



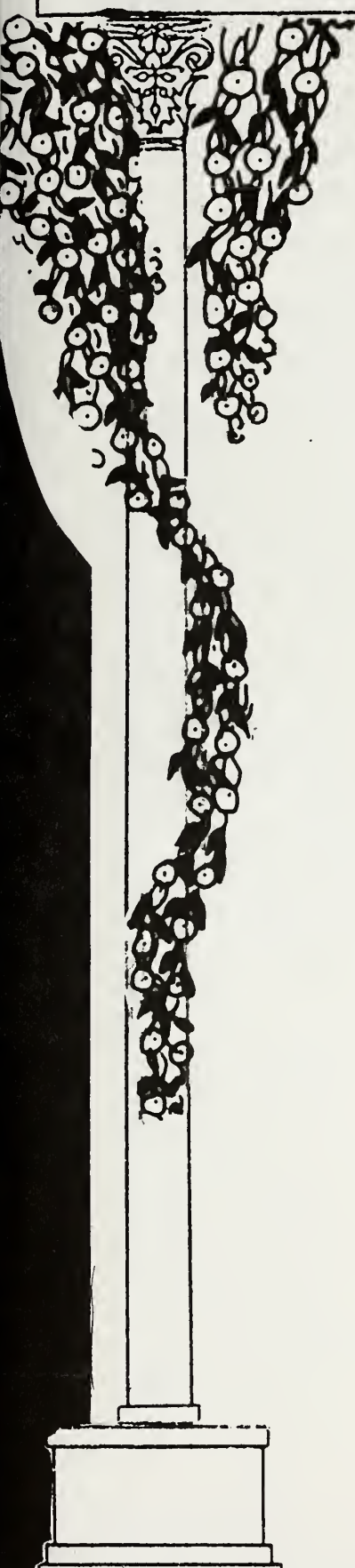


When it's a *MEDICI*, the Plot just Thickens.  
*DONNA ELEANOR* was rather Cute;  
 The Don agreed: "I'll voyage up that route!"  
 "Not yet, you won't!" the Medicis replied.  
 "Not till your *MANHOOD* has been fully tried."  
 The result of all this argy-barginem?  
 The Prince must prove himself "*IN VIRGINEM.*"  
 But first to Rome for Papal Jurisdiction;  
 The Mantuans have no Hope of Interdiction.  
 (Believe me, this is no Sordid *FICTION!*)  
 The Medicis come up with this Prescription:  
 "To Bless this Pair in Holy Matrimony,  
 The Prince must disprove his sexual Parsimony.  
 Only this can assuage all doubts. . . . Ergo:  
 The Prince *MUST*, before he to the *ALTAR* go -  
     *ERECTIO. . . INTRODUCTIO. . .*  
     *ET IN VIRGO EMISSIO. . . .*

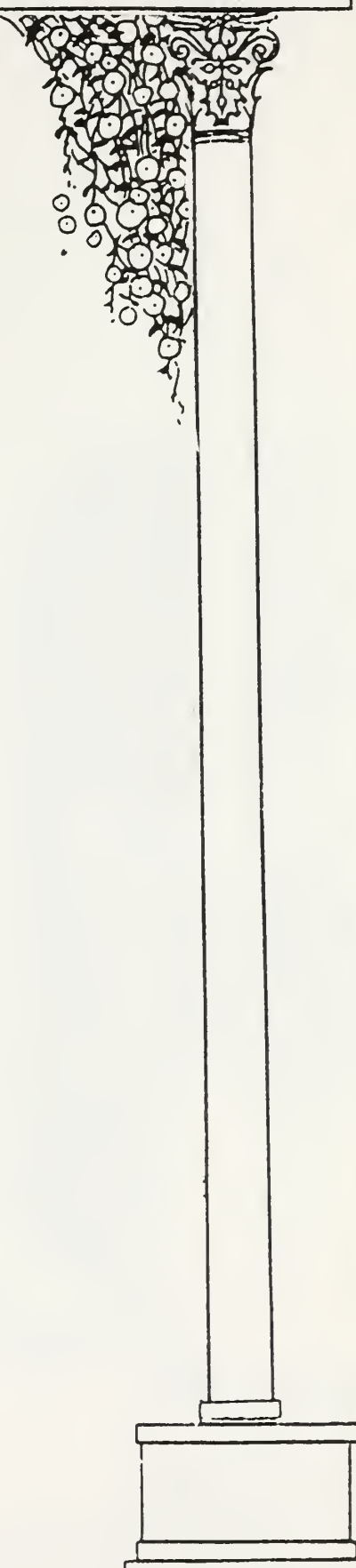
This he must do in three attempts or Trysts  
 From dusk to dawn - no fakes, no poltergeists!  
 Seven Observers we propose, t'intimate  
 That all is done a'right & consummate.  
 & one must go & feel between to prove  
 The Princely Member's firmly in the groove  
 & that the couple's Copulation's right,  
 & that the conjugation's *TRULY* tight. . . ."  
 "Enough, enough!" the Pope is definite.  
 "The Time & Means seems reasonable to Us!  
 So 'Quid vobis Videtur?' & this time no fuss!"  
 & up they rose, their Hats aloft, each cuss.  
 The blasphemous Motions carried -  
     *UNANIMOUS.*








## CANTO QUINTO




his Vote with Papal Blessing was not waived;  
Tests of Virility weren't thought DEPRAVED!  
With Woeful Speed a heinous Plan was laid  
To find, procur, & bring a Virtuous Maid,  
To Venice - chosen as a Neutral Venue.  
(It matter'd not that RAPE was on the MENU!.)  
Medicis & Mantuans join'd hand in hand  
To scour Convents, Orphanages &  
Locate a VIRGIN, a NOVITIATE,  
An ORPHAN for the Prince to satiate -  
This was the normal Papal way t'initiate  
The TESTS OF VIRILITY. Such girls were best,  
All said, their plight arous'd no Interest.  
So thus the poor lass Julia was found;  
The Pope & everyone declared her sound.  
(Alas! she was so innocent & mild;  
'Twas Sacrilege to see her so defiled,  
One a convent's nuns had reared - a child.)  
Thez brought her to VENICE in the Night,  
Dress'd her in Garments of the Purest White.  
But Chance had come to prorogate her FATE —  
'Twas her Time of Month to MENSTRUATE.  
"The Region's too humid; it's inappropriate!"  
But when the Curse was ended, it was Lent.  
The Church's Rules on Sex were pertinent:  
The Whole World over had to be Abstinent!  
At length a time arrived when all was well.  
(I hesitate, my Friends, but I must tell  
What happene'd & to whom just what befell.)  
The Prince's GENITALIA had been inspected -



*"No perversions!" the Legate interjected;  
Then they were left to try what was expected.  
The Papal Retinue withdrew in taste  
& left the Prince a MAIDENHEAD to waste.  
Silence reigned so long Time seemed to stand;  
Four Revolutions made the Minute Hand.  
When suddenly a FEARFUL SHRIEK, & more,  
Brought all the Prelates rushing to the door:  
The nightgowned Prince lay WRITHING on t'floor  
In AGONY, clutching his Royal Stomach.  
His Face was green. He arched his princely Back.  
(Ate fifty OYSTERS - told to by some QUACK  
Who said they were an APHRODISIAC.)  
But a frightful AGUE'd overtook him.  
All DESIRE had gone; LUST quite forsook him.  
"HE VIOLATED NOTHING!" sobbed Julia, & fled.  
"We'll have another Congress when he is fed  
A Meal more fitting," the good Legate said.*

### CANTO SESTO

ourteen March, 1583,  
All again is ready for a further SPREE.  
The Prince is stripped, the Doctors measure him.  
The Prelates note that he is tall but slim;  
"At rest his Flag is rather disappointin',  
Yet now 'tis hoist, 'tis straight & upward pointin'.  
We can report, we never would equivocate,  
Things rare or artificial we negate.  
The Prince is CLEAN - a Nobleman to rate."  
So once again they lead him the girl,  
(Pretty Child, poor Virgin, poor, pretty pearl!)



Th'ensuing Noise's too loud to hear one speak.  
 Joists, Floors, Windows, Doors, Stairs & Walls all creak.  
 "'Tis time he called; he's been in there a Week."  
 But then they heard the Prince's urgent Shout.

The first t'arrive is hard to single out;  
 The Papal Legate probes deep to prove the Bout.  
 "All seems to me to be just where it should,"  
 He said. "Come celebrate with wine from wood."  
 The Prince declined, "If only that I could  
 With fair Julia stay awhile, Signior?"  
 "Dear Boy of course you may enjoy her more!  
 As the Holy Father's proxy, I implore,  
 That for propriety, only that you close the door."

They left the Prince poor Julia to their SHAME.  
 Then later that same Morning, the Prince came  
 Out again. "I've broken three full lances,"  
 Was all he said as off on Horse he prances.  
 Except, "Well thank you Signiors, I bid you  
 A fine day!" (Alas, alack, Tout est perdu!  
 & so it seems all's over...) But. . . "NO!" cries  
 She, at last. "NO, it's all a BUNCH of LIES!  
 He NEVER got inside me," she deeply sighs,  
 The Teardrops flowing freely from her Eyes.  
 The Pope's special Legate just stood AGHAST!  
 "OH NO!" he said, "myself, I held you FAST.  
 Your MAIDENHEAD was well & truly Cast.  
 Julia wept, "No, no! Not on Christ's Life!"  
 Once more, the Mantuan Prince had lost a Wife.





## CANTO SETTIMO



*onfusion reign'd as Rumour roam'd the streets.*

*The Medicis were firm: "No, no Repeats.*

*We've heard & seen it all; your PUNY FEATS!*

*The Mantuan Clan could see nought but Defeats.*

*(Again my friends, it falls on me to say*

*That Fickle Fate had yet more Games to play.)*

*Next day the Legate was summoned by the Maid.*

*"Please forgive me, I truly should be Flayed;*

*For Yesterday, my Lord, I was REALLY Layed.*

*The Prince, Sweet Jesu, is beautifully Made.*

*I lied to you to see him once again,*

*The PLEASURE was too Wonderful to feign,*

*One TRYST alone I'll never entertain.*

*I pray you, sweet Legate, upon my Heart,*

*To bring that Prince again. Go! Now, depart!"*

*The End is near, the Legate for his part,*

*Denied no Plea from one so poorly used.*

*The Prince was GAME & really quite amused.*

*Julia became quite thoroughly PERUSED.*

*Next year she wed & to her Husband proffered,*

*A three month babe, a diaper - all GOLD-COFFERED.*

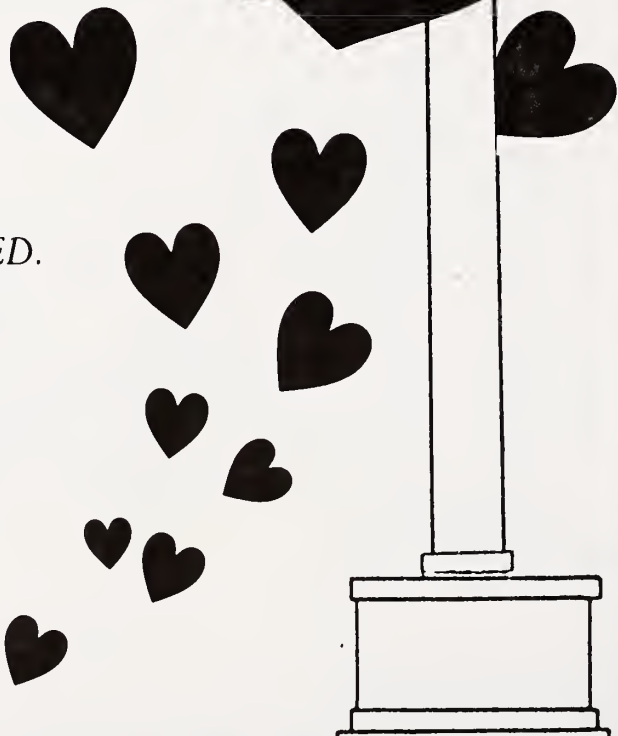
*Vincenzo had a BASTARD after all.*

*Donna Eleanor married him in the Fall,*

*& bore him eight Sons, vigorous & tall.*

*Margherita remained CLOISTERED with St. Paul.*


*Her final destiny no one can recall.*





The page is framed by a decorative border consisting of two tall, slender columns on either side, topped with ornate capitals. A large, light-colored arch is centered between the columns. At the base of the columns are small, dark, spiky plants. A jagged, black, zig-zag line is drawn across the upper right portion of the arch.

## EPILOGUE

hus COMES to an END the Congress of Venice.  
A narrow CONDUIT is a terrible MENACE;  
But no CHURCH should force one so TUMESCENT  
To RAVISH one who's barely PUBESCENT.

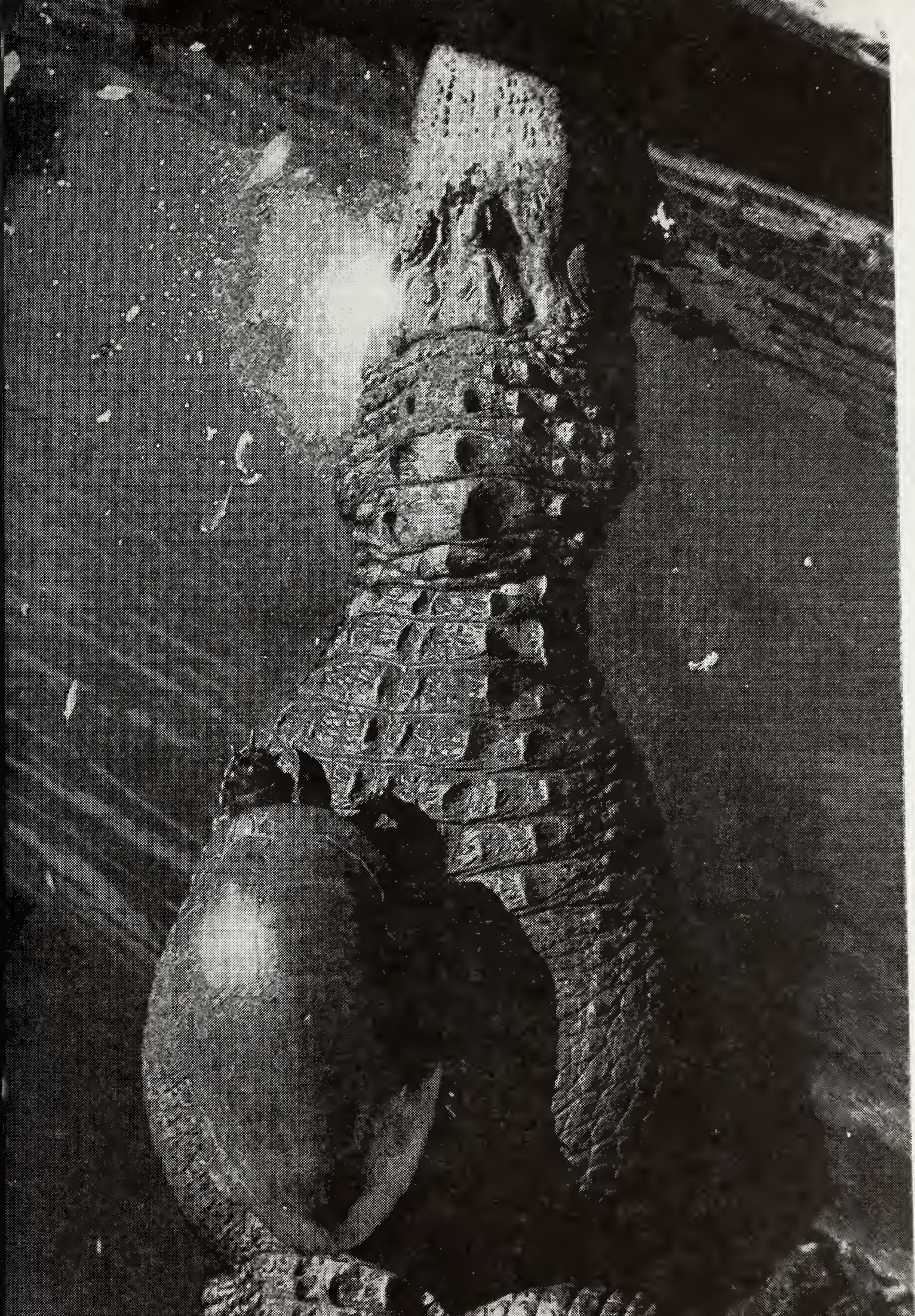
So forgive, I pray, my Indiscretion -  
Excuse me please, a Sat'rist's Concretion.  
My Aim was but to Mention a Moral,  
& to exhumate an ancient Quarrel.

So now at last I end my poet's STAND -  
& ask just that you give your gen'rous HAND;  
& if you think I went beyond the bland,  
I hope you'll overlook & understand!











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# A SECOND HELPING

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“Won’t someone kindly tell me,  
Won’t someone answer why,  
I picked a lemon in the Garden of Love,  
Where they say only peaches grow.”

**W**hen Dad rated Mother’s displeasure she used to hum the little gem quoted above. The time he bought a washing machine for her birthday, my sisters and I heard a lot about lemons. Mother was not practical. She liked decorative presents - candy, flowers, jewelry - were her idea of proper remembrances, not a General Electric Mother’s Helper. I’m a little more down-to-earth, but I’m not above mentioning lemons when rubbed the wrong way.

Certainly Mother would have recognized the tune I hummed *sotto voce*, as I glared at King Richard, enthroned in the old walnut armchair.

“I said I’d take another piece of pie. What’s the hold-up?” His expression was a poisonous mixture of superiority and impatience.

It was a memorable moment. My mental cogs meshed together as never before, and I blindly followed my instincts. I didn’t look forward or back, but just sailed on through.

“You asked for it,” I said to myself.

In gothic novels, everything turns black. Not so in my real-life crisis. Richard’s features remained dazzlingly clear, but I felt a peculiar tingling in the ends of my fingers. The winds of destiny blew over me. Ten drab years vanished in a second. Women have prayed for courage to do what I was about to do, only to go to their graves, weaklings to the end.

“You want more pie?” I licked my lips over each yummy syllable. This could be the closest I would come to heaven.

My hand moved toward the pie pan. I’d never been a star at neighborhood baseball, but, this time, I’d qualify for the Major Leagues. A busy angel, the guardian of drunks and fools, steadied my throwing-arm. Richard watched, fascinated. As the swaying of a cobra hypnotized its prey, my deliberate movements held his gaze. Slowly, the hand holding the pan rose above my head. I was into the wind-up.

The pie was lemon meringue, a dreamy confection I’d prepared for my husband’s pleasure. The fluffy topping stood two inches high in pale, browned peaks, while snow-white valleys flecked with gold lay between. One wedge had been removed and delicate amber filling could be seen beneath the perfect topping. It was light, frothy, exquisite!

Richard was partial to lemon pie. He had already consumed the missing wedge. Aim, fire! The busy angel helped, and smack! It landed right on target in the center of his open-mouthed face. I laughed like an idiot, but Richard made only gurgling noises. Slowly, he rose to his feet. Dabbing uselessly at his dripping chin, “YOU-YOU WITCH!” he screamed in my general direction. The filling muffling his words and the meringue caking on his eyelids meant he was guessing at my location. I continued to laugh. Tears of undiluted joy ran down my cheeks. I knew I was in dire peril, but life with its fleeting pleasures seemed a fair exchange for those blissful three minutes.

Then Richard began to emerge from the



mist. He had found his handkerchief and was making progress through the meringue. What next? Unfortunately for my triumph, the picture suddenly reversed itself and I saw the scene through his eyes. What could he do to save his male pride? Laugh it off as a silly, feminine prank? Hardly. My Richard was not the giggly type and he viewed feminine pranks with disapproval. Above all, he had a profound belief in the sanctity I had just defiled with lemon pie.

There was one possible solution, short of locking me outdoors in a howling blizzard as the infuriated patriarch would have done in old-time melodramas (not practical in this case since it was mid-July) or ending our marriage with a pistol shot (feasible, since Richard kept a Saturday-Night Special handy in case of burglars). Strangely, the successful landing of the pie had washed away all my accumulated bitterness. Now I saw Richard as my cherished mate, whom I had loved for ten difficult but irreplaceable years. True, Nature had shorted him when senses of humor were passed out, but he had a lot of other nice senses. How could I give him to the divorce court?



While my beloved frantically scraped egg-white from his eyelashes, I ran to the kitchen, opened the refrigerator door, and carefully lifted the twin of the ruined pie. I always bake two pies, since the second one solves the desert problem for an extra day. I ran back and set the pie in front of Richard. It was the first thing he saw when he finally opened his eyes. He looked at the pie, then at me. The yellow fringe decorating his upper lip turned his grin into an evil leer. Seconds later, I too was clawing meringue out of my eyes and blowing the lemony filling through my nostrils. I regretted the hour I had wasted at Ronald's Elite Hair-dressing Salon, but decided it was all worthwhile when Richard's voice spoke beside me.

"Gosh, honey," it said. "What got into us?"

I breathed easier when I heard the forgiving us.

"I guess we needed to clear the air," I answered.

"Next time I bake a pie, don't criticize my piecrust and ask for a second helping in the same breath. It brings out the tigress in me. Do you want to use the shower first or shall I?"

"Oh, let's try it together," he answered grandly.

And that's what we did.

Richard and I, being human and flawed, did not live happily ever after, but we developed some mutual respect that we hadn't had before. And, yes, we still enjoy the tangy taste of lemon pie; but, since the topping has lost its appeal, I now bake covered pies. They're delicious, but not as *throwable*. A good thing, too, since covered pies require twice the pastry, and neither my piecrust nor my temper have improved.









# EULOGY FOR MY MOTHER

Loving giving Mother

staff of grace

strong fine gentle woman

radiant heart, soul and face

our love is with you always...

four loving babies in your gentle care

Mother, you have always been there

tirelessly giving of yourself

constantly bearing the wear

time has tolled and fate has written

those very lines upon your face

loving giving Mother

staff of grace

four loving daughters

dancing at your feet

Mother's love all forgiving

growing ever stronger

heartbeat after heartbeat

beautiful woman, loving wife

always there to listen

ever sharing our life

heartaches there've been many

laughter and fond memories

cherished and plenty

lonely, lonely lady

staff of grace

time has tolled and fate

has called you home

rest dear Mother

our love is with you always



## THE BELL JAR CAGE

Mother, dear mother...

it is I who am mad — not you!

Mad — seething mad — enraged by a system  
that systematically erases a woman's anger,  
a woman's rage —  
cell after cell  
page after page!

Memory scorched, burnt, gone — forever lost.  
Body jerked, convulsed, body spent, body tossed  
by heinous torturous electroshock.

Mother, dear Mother...

it is I who am mad! Shocked! Enraged!  
at this barbaric psychiatrist who refers  
to himself as a medical sage...

when in reality he is a practitioner of social control  
systematically awarded a lucrative wage,  
to keep women isolated,  
locked in their hell

their bell jar cage!

Mother, dear Mother...

it is I who am mad! Shocked! Enraged!



# BUDDY GIRL

Buddy girl...

Know that I love you.

Know that I care.

Know that I want to tell you

the world's always going to treat you fair,  
but it isn't.

Buddy girl...

You're growing big.

You're getting strong.

Your life, I hope, shall reflect the wisdom  
to right some wrong along the way.

Calling injustice, play by play.

Buddy girl...

Everyday - live your life to its fullest!

Never forgetting to take time along the way  
to look and see,  
to hear, to listen.

Buddy girl...

You may only be going on four

But know your wisdom belies those years;

I've heard it in your laughter.

I've seen it in your tears.

Buddy girl...

You are growing big.

You are growing strong.

You're teaching your little sister, right from wrong  
and that's important, don't ever forget ...  
but most important,

Buddy girl...

Is knowing right from wrong

means owning up to one's own mistakes;

that, in and of itself, tempers us to be strong.

Buddy girl...

Know that I love you!



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# WILLIAM BLAKE'S PROPHETIC VISION

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A STUDY OF "THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL" (1792)

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**W**illiam Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is actually a long prose piece or "proem" which includes many short sayings or maxims, as well as pieces of logical argument reflecting this revolutionary British Romantic poet's own philosophy regarding religion and nature.

*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* consists of "A Memorable Fancy" (five of them, in fact,) "The Voice of the Devil," and "Proverbs of Hell," and concludes with "A Song of Liberty."

"The Argument" opens the work by establishing knowledge of the creation of Heaven and the later "perilous path" (i.e. Hell). Rintrah, some manifestation of Jesus Christ or Elijah apparently - rather than the Satan of some commentators - roars over the Earth. Blake then states his main thesis:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary for Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil." Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell. (Plate 3, 7-14)

"The Voice of the Devil," speaking logically, criticizes the Bible and other religious texts. He alleges that man's soul and body are not divided, but that the soul exists as the five senses of the body, which are the "inlets of soul

in this age."

Here, too, are present some of the Marxist beliefs which seemed to occur to Blake long before Marx existed. They can be seen also in *The Songs of Experience*:

I wander thro' each charter'd street,  
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.  
And mark in every face I meet  
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,  
In every Infants cry of fear  
In every voice: in every ban  
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear....

("London" l. 1-8)

In "The Voice of the Devil," Blake cries out against all forms of restriction:

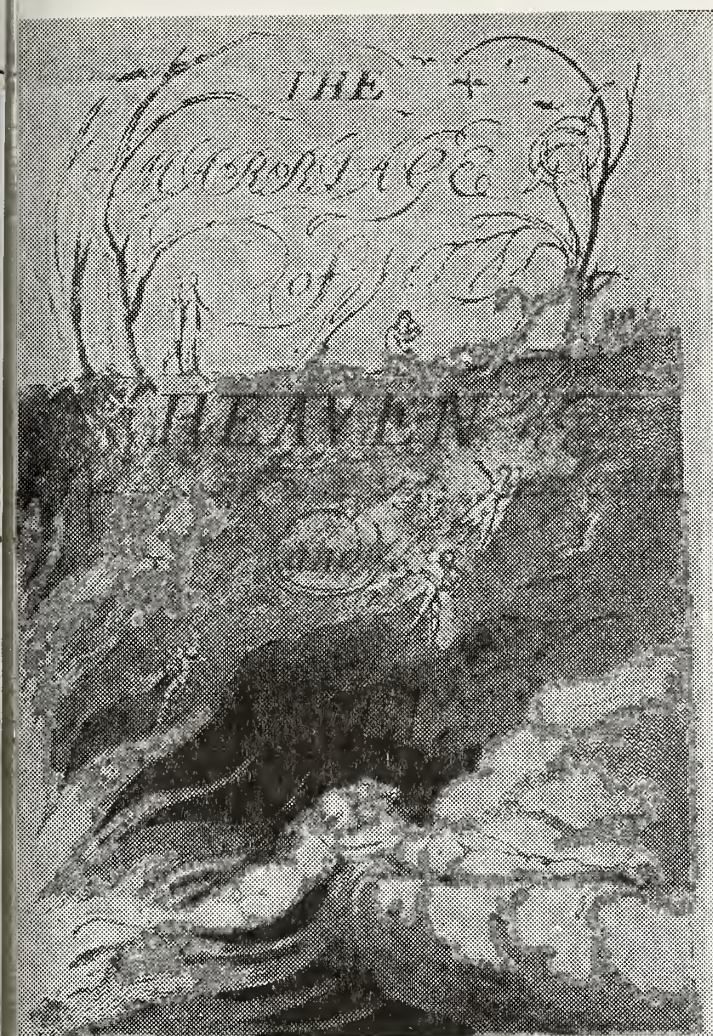
Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

And being restrained it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.

(Plate 5, 1-5)

This can be applied as a figure of speech, representing the actual restraint of intellect by the forces in control politically, until the workers are little more than obliging sheep. The passage can also be interpreted to represent the individual's own thoughts being restrained by reason or established religion, especially in





*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Copy G, plate 1, title page. 1790-3. Relief etching color printed, finished and heightened with watercolor. 5 7/8 x 4 in. By permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University.

regards to sexuality, until the individual's (sexual) desires and intellectual desires are deeply buried within.

The first "Memorable Fancy" relates how the poet (Blake) discovered the "Proverbs of Hell" (1-8) :

As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyments of Genius; which to Angels look like torment and insanity. I collected some of their proverbs thinking that, as the sayings used in a nation mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell, shew the nature of Infernal Wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments.

"The Proverbs of Hell" contain many fine sayings; many are declarations against institutions - some are facetious, others full of insight

and social criticism, barbs pointed at organized religion and politics:

Prisons are built with stones of law, Brothels with bricks of Religion.... (Plate 8, 1)

Prayers Plow not! Praises reap not. (Plate 9, 20)

Many have a sexual significance:

The lust of the goat is the bounty of God. (Plate 8, 3)

The nakedness of woman is the work of God. (5)

And in the next quotation is an image of sexuality in reference to the "seeds of joy":

Joys Impregnate. Sorrow brings forth. (9)

This, too, offers an example of the "contraries" which dominate *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

Other images of sexuality in "The Proverbs" include harvest and reaping, "sweet delight," overflowing fountain, the laying of eggs, barrenness (contrary to sexuality), the "nursing of unacted desires" and, amazingly, "the head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands and feet Proportion."

In the last plate of "The Proverbs" (see next page,) Blake offers a complex condemnation and succinct and humanist analysis of the origins of organized religion and priesthood:

... thus began Priesthood.

Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.

And at length they pronounced that the Gods had ordered such things.

Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.

What, then, is product of the marriage of Heaven and Hell?

I see Blake's answer to this as man. Man created the gods; the Greeks and their panhellenic beliefs, Christianity and the moral and social enslavement of mankind by religion.

This is what I think of when I contemplate *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, combined with the shorter "The Garden of Love."

First, man arrives on the scene. What is his primary job? The same as that of all animals, as Darwin discovered: reproduction. The opti-



mum conditions for survival, under the circumstances, existed when the man was able to protect his women and children and help to provide for them. Thus the concept of monogamy was established as a social order. (I know this is not in Blake's work but allow me to go on with my explanation.) Now, man's and woman's natural desires to procreate still exist, although the social need for order and survival necessitated the nuclear family. This condition notwithstanding, copulation was still accepted outside of the monogamous condition until organized religion put a stop to it.

Why, when, as Blake says in both *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and "The Garden of Love" that desire is beautiful and natural? Of course, the condemnation of "free love" and the concept of adultery by the church created a "contrary" line of thinking, evidenced by Blake and others who take the time to consider the impact of religious constraints on our personal lives and how they work against nature.

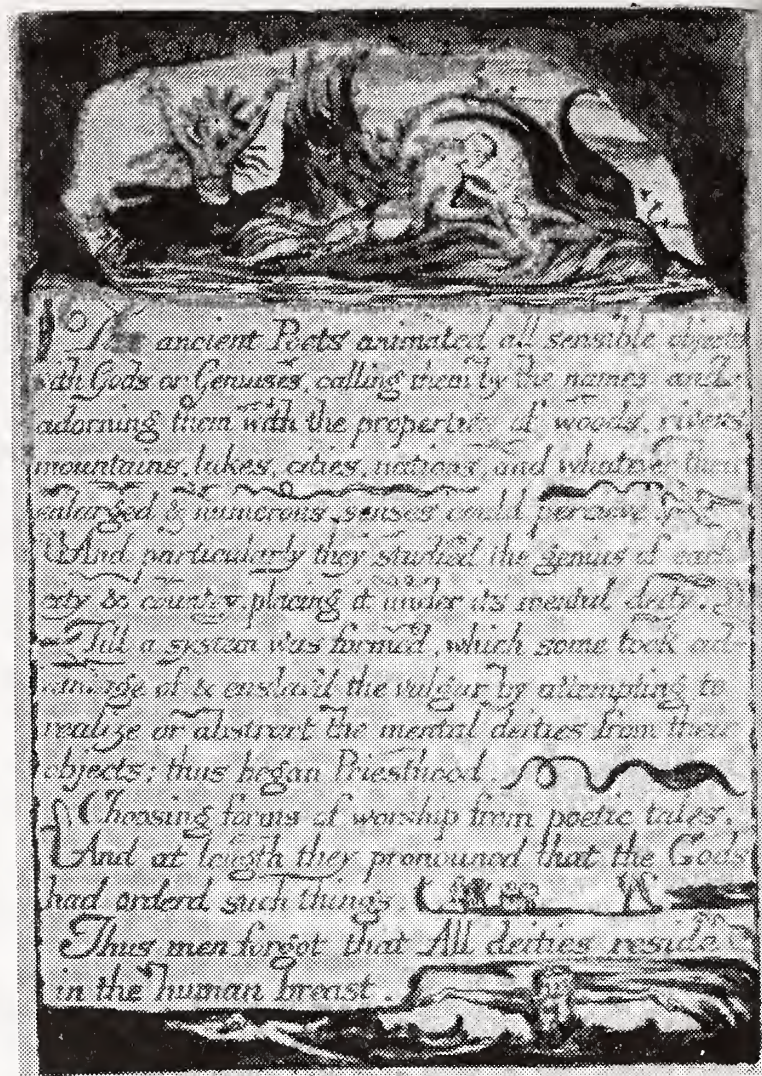
In one of the "Fancies" Blake attacks the mystic philosopher, Swedenborg, whom he alleges "conversed with Angels who are all religious and conversed not with Devils who all hate religion...."

There lies the explanation for Blake's setting; these are the proverbs of Hell, the proposals of and for an anti-religion, a "religion" of truth to the spirit of man, vis-a-vis "the Body," and the notion that, "Everything that lives is Holy." Blake also recognizes in Jesus' virtue something which exists as a result of His breaking the ten commandments, thereby idolizing the man while condemning the theology.

"A Song of Liberty" concludes the piece with a caustic warning to England with these words.

Look up! Look up! O citizen of London enlarge thy countenance.... Empire is no more. (Plate 25, 12)

The same can be said to Americans today. "Leave counting gold!" and look beyond mere religion and telereigion for your spiritual



*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Copy G, plate 11. 1790-3. Relief etching with water color strengthened in ink. 5 7/8 x 4 in. By permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University.

source of relief. Think and read and learn and remember Blake's admonition

The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water and breeds reptiles of the mind."  
(Plate 16, 81-3)

I cannot say strongly enough how amazed I am at the depth and currentness of Blake's tenets. I thoroughly admire this man and see him as one of the true creative geniuses of all time. He was poet, artist, printer, philosopher, and visionary. I wish someone like him, a modern man, would come and wake everybody up. I am waiting.

Dara Kam



# O THOSE UNLOVED

Who,  
Who are these moral people,  
Who have so trampled on their nature,  
Who have so conquered their baser selves  
To make the rest of us sinners?

Show me even one, just one,  
That I may grieve my losses  
And praise his gains.

As for me,  
I still languish in ambiguities  
And torment in contradictions;  
For my passion, adulterous mistress,  
Resides not always with my reason  
But with my soul is entangled.  
And my heart knows follies  
My tongue dare not confess.

But what,  
What icy logic can retain  
The wild, mysterious currents of my heart?

And which,  
Which fiery codes can consume  
The hungry, limitless fuels of my intellect?

And Whose,  
Whose disaffectionate frown can relieve  
The heavy, respiteless weight of my existence?

What futile effort!  
What sterile life!  
What joyless struggle!  
What hypocrites!





But look around;  
See the walking wounds we are.  
Broken spirits and searching hearts.  
We stand disjointed wholes.  
We stand humanity.

Yet,  
If there be one,  
Show me now.  
Show me those who, though mere mortals,  
Live celestial lives;  
And if there be none,  
Let God be my guide.  
I shall aspire to a less perfect goal:  
I shall love.

## TO THE SEEKERS

And when they saw themselves,  
They cried,  
'We seek not truth;  
Give us a working rationale.  
We have no limitless mind.'

And when they looked across the universe,  
They proclaimed,  
'We seek not knowledge;  
Give us a trace of actuality.  
We need no more than daily bread.'

We are trapped within dimensions  
And life retains its mysteries.  
And we just travel along.





THE KING AND HIS MISTRESS AND THE DOG GONE OUT FOR A WALK Kennedy Reid (ink, 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in)



## DAY BREAK (OF A RUNNER)

i run in that space where women in waitress  
white and flat heavy shoes lock the doors  
of run-down trailers carefully,  
20 feet from the highway,

where whistlers are silent,  
construction workers with black metal  
boxes and yellow hats walk alone,  
wait alone for buses,

where cats appear out of nowhere  
following the same invisible route  
as the day before;  
men in untied robes walk stiff-  
legged from front door to newspaper  
and back, not seeing

where cars are isolated animals,  
scent of the herd lost  
and the night shift moves toward oblivion,  
miners, the lights on their foreheads  
black

(that space where you go either toward  
or away from the longing  
for unconscious dark,  
the kiss on eyes dropping with unthinking  
slow rhythms, gently transforming  
i to all)

in that barely noticeable  
pause of the key  
before it turns in the lock.



free space

gratuitous space

a black woman with turbaned head

and worn grey uniform already

damp at the armpits

half smiles

fool, she says with her eyes,

don't you have enough real work to sweat for

(sisyphus, destined to roll a stone

up a mountain and watch it fall, forever,

starts again but this time because he wants to,

because it's a cool dawn, the moon

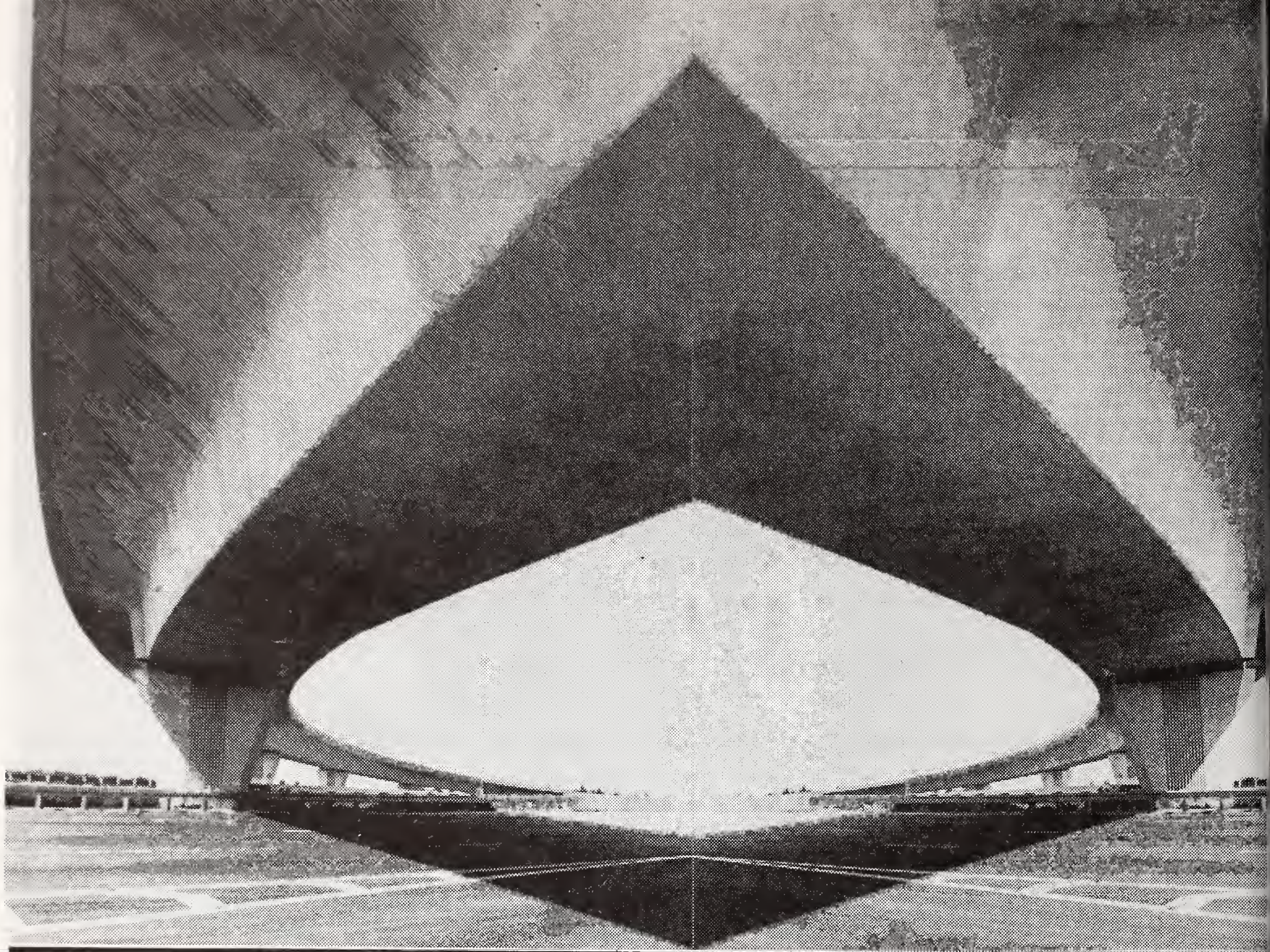
lights his way and in a live oak

a flock of blackbirds sing all at once,

vibrating against the fading

stars)









BORAH PAVALACK





# GRADUATION

Juanita Harmon

Oblivious to the rhythmic "JUMP, JUMP, JUMP," chanted by the morbid crowd, Jack stood on the ledge flashing an empty moronic grin. A moment ago, he had taken three mincing steps; before that two. Now, he would attempt four steps in his bizarre game. His mother's hysterical pleas, complemented by those of the parish priest, screeched into one ear and, denied acceptance, out the other. Jack wondered if his dear nagging mom would recognize his body after it had hurtled twenty-three stories to bestow a gruesome kiss on the beckoning pavement. His mind continued to wander. *Will I feel what? Maybe somebody'll vomit on my splatter. Would the papers call me "Jumpin' Jack"?* His eyes lit up like those of a child entertaining thoughts of an eagerly anticipated event.

Jack jerked, distracted from fantasy by the piercing voice of the priest.

"Son, please come in and talk this over. I know that you truly have no wish to defy His Divine Will. I want you to..."

Abruptly silenced by a savage look, the clergyman backed out of the window and into the I-told-you-so stares of the police. The mother tried.

"Jack, baby I can't believe you want to do this to your old mother. Disgrace, shame, me alone in this cold, cruel, coldest of cruel worlds."

Neither looks nor words were necessary to silence the woman whose tone was weighted more with annoyance and aggravation than worry or fear. She knew that the visible neck spasms were a prelude to a fit of dancing, screaming hysteria and all she needed was for

the world to see Jack spin off the ledge in response to her motherly exhortations.

While police negotiated and city official argued the feasibility of making a grab for Jack's ankles, the unconcerned object of their debate mumbled and fiddled with his fingers. His quick turn toward the crowded window drew a chorus of gasps, followed by an anxious silence.

"Hey, everybody, hey! I know I'm a bother to you like doing this. That's what my mother says, a dumb bother."

Eyes turned from the troubled teen to the petite woman who looked neither right nor left, but continued to stare at her dysfunctional offspring, the "cross to bear."

"I won't just jump off here. I'll make a deal, kind of. Do my eeny, meeny, miney, moe."

Jack's satisfied smile was a mismatch to the puzzled stares of his audience. His mother was the only person to accept his decision with obvious glee. She reassured the others.

"We haven't a thing to worry about. My boy's never been quite right in the head and whenever he plays this little game he can finish it up only with the negative alternative. This way his fingers will tell him, 'No, don't jump.' Oh, I'm so happy, so relieved."

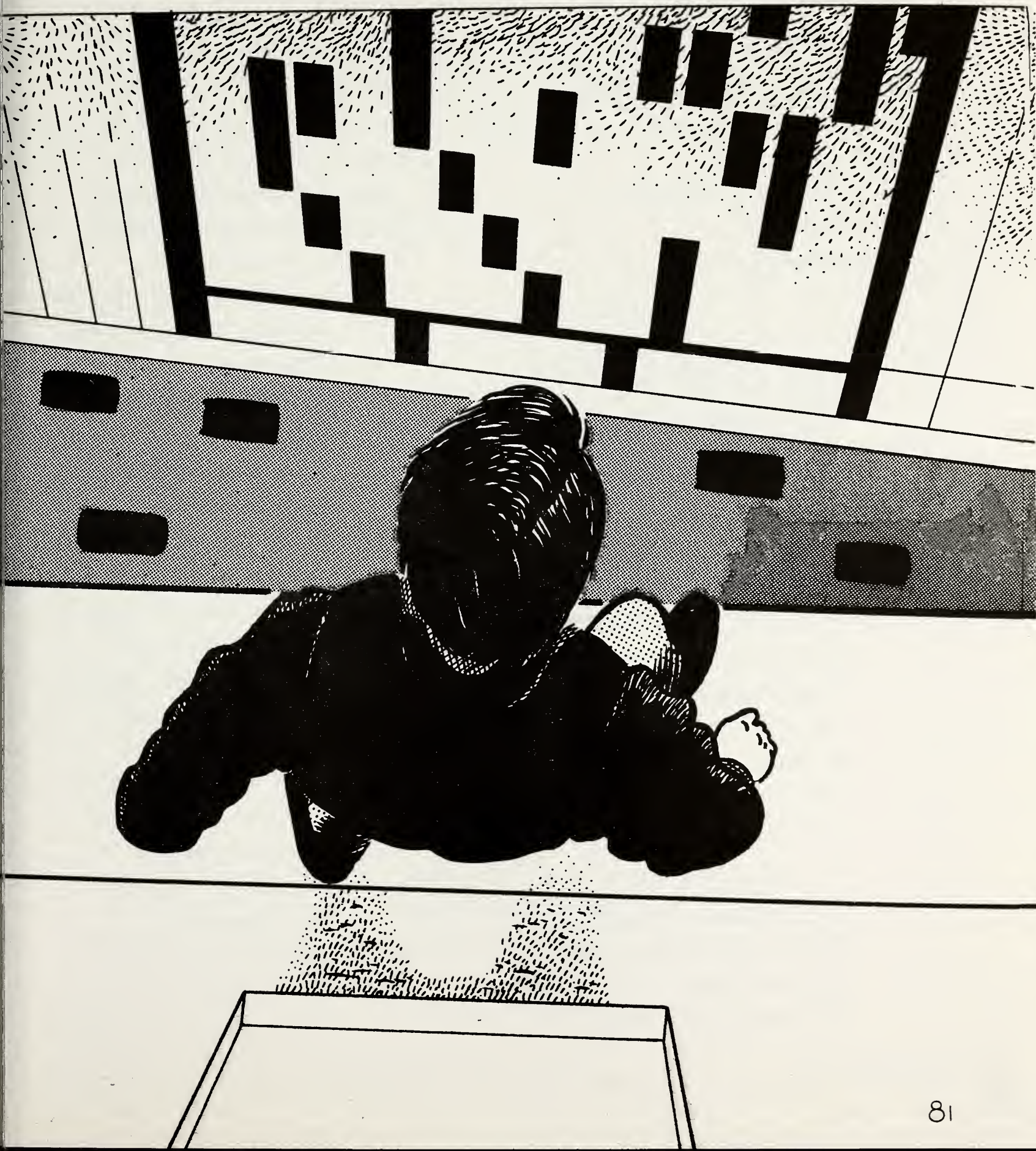
While his mother detailed the positive aspects of opting for life or death by the outcome of a kiddie ditty, Jack determinedly worked his fingers.

"Eeny, meeny, miney, moe. Catch a retard by the toe. If he hollers..."

Oblivious to the frowns directed at her, Jack's sole relative, like a symphony conductor keeping time for the orchestra, nodded and waved a finger in rhythm with his sing-song



tal.  
ack turned to his smiling mom and loudly,  
adly announced, "I wanted to surprise you.  
urned the end."





## COMPULSIVE EATER

I am eating poems for breakfast.  
When lunchtime comes  
I will open a book  
like a package of crackers  
and one by one  
digest them all.

## ALLIGATOR ALLEY

The vultures await you,  
beside the gators  
sleeping in the swamp;  
they flutter from their suppers  
of crushed bone and blood.

You see them watching  
from tree-tops, waiting -  
a new screech of tires,  
the thud of body against metal;  
a once-warm furred animal  
now cold on cement.

You shiver, knowing  
they make no distinction  
in the source of their meals,  
grip the steering-wheel tighter  
and ease up on the gas.

## TEMPTATION

What if the question  
were never answered,  
if no one spoke-  
no bell to break the spell-  
nothing, not one word?  
Silence grows white  
as chalk on a board  
black as empty rooms.  
It squeaks and feathers  
its plume of dust,  
sends imaginary shivers  
down spines stiff as manners.  
Would one pale hand  
waver, a small bird  
unsure of flight, if only  
to ask for dismissal?  
Would we be here,  
all of us, till morning  
rose like white paper  
streaked with red  
expanded or cutting  
the quality of dawn,  
while the quiet noise  
grew louder and louder  
in our unanswered ears?



## THE WATCH

It is 2:30 a.m. on a night  
a category four hurricane churns  
700 miles south and a little east  
of where, at the moment, I'm waiting,  
perhaps for the storm, perhaps  
for you dressed in disguise  
looking like wind, sounding like rain.

## FLORIDIAN FACT OF LIFE

Besides the absolute ugliness,  
the gross design and structure,  
the nasty habit of flying;  
besides the awful squish  
or crunch under foot,  
the feeler, leg, or piece of wing  
left sticking to a shoe;  
besides the shuddery feeling  
of a crawling up the arm,  
the frantic shake and chase  
beyond all sense of reason;  
besides all that there is nothing  
except the palmetto, plump and hungry.

---

BARBRA NIGHTINGALE



# RESCUE

The day begins with the harsh tones of the plectron blaring forth its alert tone. After answering roll call we start on station duties: scrubbing urine-caked toilets, mopping dirty floors, and checking the med unit.

Enroute to calls the siren screams through the streets, piercing the serenity of drivers as they sit in their cars: increased pulse rate, sweaty palms, or nervous tremor. At night beams of crimson light from the bar top of the truck dance across the road almost like Darth Vader's light saber, cutting the night into small pieces for easy digestion. When the truck passes in front of a building with a mirrored front the light bar and the strobe combine to create a glittering, shimmering luminescence.

As we arrive at the scene, the truck comes to a sudden halt; we jump out and throw ninety pounds of equipment across our backs and rush towards the home. As we get close, a rumpled young man looking old beyond his years, grief chiseled into his face, mumbles something about his mother being dead. At the bottom of the stairs the stench of rotting human flesh rips through my body causing me to choke back down my lunch from an hour ago. At the top of the stairs we can peer into the bedroom and see lying on the bed the nude, bloated, rotting mass of the once human being. Large eruptions on the abdomen ooze body fluid into pools on the floor. The eruptions resemble small volcanoes discharging biological lava. Everything ends after the stone-faced cop finishes his paper work and the body is removed. I roll the rescue unit onto the street and point it toward the station. We sit in the truck not saying a word, listening to the din of traffic, absorbed in our own thoughts about our own mothers and our own homes.

At midnight we fall asleep with the hope of not having to get up till morning. No such luck; at 3:30 a.m. the plectron explodes with a hundred-decibels scream that yanks us out of bed with our eyes still shut and sends us on our way to do it all over again.

Steve Kavalir



Product of a brilliant  
crazy" father and a cre-  
tively "off-center" phil-  
sopher-mother, how can  
his child be anything  
less than the most intelli-  
gent, stimulating and  
marvelous creature on  
earth? My friends, and  
other unenlightened pe-  
ple I know, all tell me of  
the wonderful exploits  
of "so-called" exception-  
al qualities of their off-  
spring, but I fail to see  
anything earth-moving  
in their blase' accounts.  
These observations are  
more like hearing about  
the insignificant antics of

a cute pet or zoo animal, amusing to listen to,  
but easily forgotten - nothing, of course, like  
the dramatic impact on the senses that my child  
can have.

Taking a quick glance, one is immediately  
struck by the plump deliciousness enveloping  
her entire persona. Captured by this, one is  
drawn closer, noticing how her azure eyes spar-  
gle with clear intelligence. A sprinkling of  
freckles dances lightly across her nose and her  
long, glistening hair floats about her like an  
aura. The overall impression is one of innocent,  
ethereal pixie-magic. Compare this to the every-  
day variety of clumsy, lackluster little boys or  
whining, teary-eyed little girls frequently found  
in supermarkets, and it is blatantly clear, that  
when it come to beauty, my child shines like  
the morning sun.

Believe me, this is no ordinary four-year-old.  
She is truly fun to be with. Life, to her, is a giant  
game that she plays with a *joie de vivre* not seen  
in many. Any mundane activity can be magi-  
cally transformed into a zesty celebration, pre-  
paring dinner, for instance, which is not high on  
my list of favorite things to do.

## Jeanie Blum

---

# LET ME SHOW YOU A STAR

AN UNBIASED VIEW OF  
THE TOTAL SUPERIORITY  
OF MY CHILD  
AS TOLD BY  
A DOTING  
MOTHER

---

Along comes this little  
cooking-show *aficionado*,  
dragging a chair behind  
her. Suddenly, a midget  
gourmet is before me,  
gleefully pouring liquids,  
stirring batter, shaking  
spices and tearing lettuce  
with gusto. Intermingled  
with step-by-step instruc-  
tions to her are calm  
reassurances to me when  
a half-pound of coated  
shrimp plops to the floor.

"Don't worry, Mom.  
Duke will eat it."

Show me another kid  
who prefers *The Frugal  
Gourmet* to *Care Bears*, who  
emulates the chef and

who displays a keen ability to clearly solve  
problems under stress. It's not easy, is it?

After dinner, *WSHE* is tuned in, and we are  
treated to an outstanding interpretation of song  
and dance, performed by, none other than, this  
many talented superkid. To the strain of Billy  
Idol's guitar, she is leaping around the room,  
frantically belting out the lyric, "...With a  
rebel yell, she cried more, more, more." Feel-  
ing the music, with arms raised and hair flying,  
her face is contorted into that misfit sneer of a  
true rocker.

She generates enough energy to resurrect the  
dead. And she does. Soon we are all, including  
Duke, involved in the frenetic dancing led by  
this powerful imp. I don't know of any child,  
other than this special one, who is able to  
involve the family in such carefree abandon.  
What fun!

So, here is the little girl I call the best. She is  
undeniably beautiful. She is certainly fun, crea-  
tive, intelligent and, without a doubt, the most  
enjoyable and wonderful child known to man.  
Or, at least, to me. Any enlightened person can  
see that.



# A Bestiary

by Christine Cernuto

















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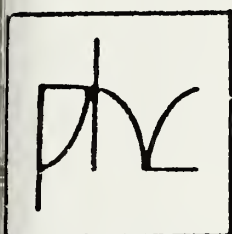
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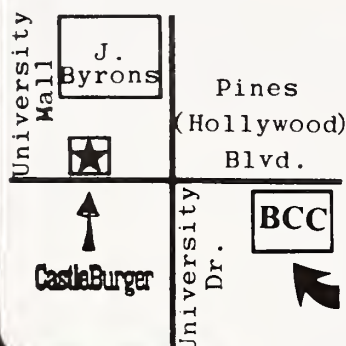
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# NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Jean Blum**-Born in New York. Attended Jefferson High School, presently majoring in Interior Design at BCC. Married with one child. *I'm now concentrating on expanding horizons after a long hiatus of studying life before returning to school. I'm a jack of all trades, master of none.*

**Christine Cern** \*o-Married. Freshman Art major, intending to go on and finish her education with a BFA. Gentle sweet Chris' preference: *Creating my own to imitating others.*

**George Chen**-Born in Jamaica. Graduates this semester from BCC with his major in Art. Graphic Art is his forte. *I'm a devout comic book aficionado.... Art work is never really finished, you just give up on it.*

**Eileen Eliot**-Is an academic adviser and part-time English instructor at South Campus. Has had poems published in several small press journals. Her chapbook, *household gods* is available at the bookstore. *I'm an addicted long-distance runner.*

**Marc Kevin Hall**-Presently handling international communications for a jewelry importer. An astonishing Shakespeare look-alike. His philosophy on life: *If it stays the same from day to day you're probably screwing it up.*

**Juanita Harmon**-Communications major. Mother. Won Florida Community College Press Association General Magazine non-fiction 1st place award for her "Black in the '60s," in *The Observer Beatles' Supplement*, June 1987. *Grew up in the Bronx in an Italian neighborhood, attended a Polish Catholic high school, hung out with Puerto Ricans on a German block. I feel now I'm getting my technical, formal education at BCC.*

**Dara Kam**-Born in Illinois. High school in Jackson, Wyoming. Transferred from University of Michigan to BCC and obtained AA degree this summer. "She has a razor-sharp mind and a rare insight into literature," said her Brit. Lit. instructor. Kara, if you ever read this, please get in touch with him.

**Stephen Kavalin**-Born in New Jersey. Attended Cooper City High School and is now aiming to attend the U of F. He is a practicing paramedic. *Aut disce aut discede. (Learn or leave.)*

**Richard Kent**-Returning student, majoring in Journalism Marketing. *Been round the world a time or two. Lived Virgin Islands, South Carolina, New York, and elsewhere. Sometime writer, photographer, bartender, computer consultant, full-time student.*

**Bobbi Manes**-Born Washington DC Attended South Broward High School. First entered BCC in 1962. Vietnam veteran. Now resuming her BCC education, majoring in Sociology.

**John Mazar**-Born Binghamton NY. Single. Business Administration major hopes to graduate in August '88. *Reality contains today, with illusions of tomorrow.*

**Nancy Morgen**-Born in Tennessee. Attended Pompano Beach High School. Obtained her AA degree in Nursing and her AS at BCC in 1979. Recently enrolled at BCC taking Creative Writing and Poetry. Has only been writing seriously for little over a year, but won USF poetry contest this year. Has two sons.

**Barbra Nightingale**-English instructor at BCC. Has Masters. Has numerous poems published in various journals. Has two books of poetry: *Lovers Never Die* (1981); *Prelude to a Woman* (1986). Last one available in bookstore. *I was born with a pen in my hand and vaccinated with a phonograph needle. Words are life.*

**Nancy Peterson**-Born in Illinois. Attended Sheridan Vocational School. Presently enrolled at BCC majoring in Business Administration.

**Kennedy Reid**-Born Jamaica 1962. Graduating BCC (Art major) December 1987. *Art is not created; it is crystallized.*

**Chris Reiss**-Born UK, 1940. South Campus English instructor and collegewide magazine adviser. *Bigamist to wife and magazine, and probably in big trouble.*

**Jodi Rubin**-Journalism major. Editor of IT'S. *I used to be an ex-cocktail waitress.*

**Barbara Schaffer**-Originally from Balto. Md. *Floridian by habit.* English major. Former *Observer* co-editor. Jacob's mother. Plans to go to U of M Sept. 1988 - Honors English Literature major. Wants to be a career English teacher.

**Genie Shayne**-Born in Miami. Attended BCC from 1984 to 1987, majored in English. Currently attending FAU, destination unknown. *My goal in life is to develop and successfully market a solution that removes the odor of cat urine from household furniture.*

**Michael Shayne**-Born in Canada. Attended Lindsey Hopkins. A Psychology major at BCC, but will be attending FIU in June. *You've got to take things with a sense of humor. You'll get through if you laugh at yourself.*

**Evan Steinman**-Currently in drafting and is now working on an air brush painting. He will be entering Nova University in June '88. *Life is too important to take seriously.*

**Priscilla Tully**-Native of Pennsylvania. Has lived in Florida since 1962. Married to an Air Force Officer, spent tours of duty with him in Panama, Germany and Great Britain. Writer of humorous stories. Has contributed to many national publications. Currently completing a science fiction novel. For the past three years a student in BCC Central's Saturday morning manuscript workshop.

Compiled by Cecille Alexis & Stephanie Gurland

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